SUPPLEMENTS TO
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE

*

Rituals in Early Christianity

New Perspectives on Tradition and Transformation

*

Edited by
NIENKE M. VOS AND ALBERT C. GELJON

BRILL

Rituals in Early Christianity

Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae

TEXTS AND STUDIES OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND LANGUAGE

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In memory of Jan den Boeft (1935–2019)
dear colleague and friend
chair of the Society for Early Christian Studies 1991–2001

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Abbreviations

Generally, the abbreviations of biblical books and ancient texts and modern literature follow the guidelines set out in the *The SBL Handbook of Style*. Second Edition. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CCSA	Corpus Christianorum Series Apocryphorum
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
DACL	*Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*
FC	Fontes Christianae
FOTC	Fathers of the Church
GCS	Die griechische christliche Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
ICUR	*Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae*
JECS	*Journal of Early Christian Studies*
LAHR	Late Antique History and Religion
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MGH AA	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Auctores Antiquissimi
MGH SS rer. Merov.	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
NP	*Der neue Pauly*
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church
NRSV	*New Revised Standard Version*
ODCC	*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*
PG	Patrologia cursus completus: series Graeca
PL	Patrologia cursus completus: series Latina
RAC	*Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*
RE	*Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SP	*Studia Patristica*
ThesCRA	Thesaurus Cultus et Rituum Antioquorum
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians
VC	*Vigiliae Christianae*
VCS	Vigiliae Christianae Supplements
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Unterschuchungen zum Neuen Testament

Notes on Contributors

Jan N. Bremmer
Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies, University of Groningen.

Jutta Dresken-Weiland
Extraordinary Professor of Christian Archaeology and Byzantine Art History, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen.

Karel C. Innemée
Research fellow, University of Amsterdam and the University of Divinity, Melbourne.

Leon Mock
Teacher of Judaism, Tilburg School of Catholic Theology, Tilburg University.

Paula Rose
Teacher of Classics at Fons Vitae Lyceum Amsterdam; research associate, Centre for the Study of Early Christianity, Tilburg University and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Gerard Rouwhorst
Professor Emeritus of Liturgical Studies, Tilburg School of Catholic Theology, Tilburg University.

Hans van Loon
Research associate, Centre for the Study of Early Christianity, Tilburg University and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Jacques van der Vliet
Jozef M.A. Janssen Professor of Religions of Ancient Egypt at Radboud University, Nijmegen, staff-member of the Institute for Eastern Christian Studies (Nijmegen), and affiliated researcher of the Leiden Institute for Area Studies (Leiden University).

Joop van Waarden
Research fellow in Latin, Radboud University, Nijmegen.

Mariëtte Verhoeven
Research fellow at the Radboud Institute for Culture and History (RICH), Nijmegen.

Rianne Voogd
Currently working as minister and health care chaplain. From 2010 until 2015 PhD student of the Protestant Theological University Groningen.

Nienke M. Vos
Assistant professor (tenured) and senior lecturer at the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam; senior researcher, Centre for the Study of Early Christianity, Tilburg University and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

New Perspectives on Early Christian Rituals: An Introduction

Nienke M. Vos

1 *Sitz im Leben*: The Society for Early Christian Studies[1]

One of the most remarkable personalities in the history of Early Christian studies in the Netherlands, one who also gained deep intellectual respect internationally, was Christine Mohrmann (1903–1988).[2] She received her secondary education at grammar schools in Groningen and Arnhem before going on to study Classics, first in Utrecht in 1922, and in Nijmegen the following year, where she enrolled at the newly founded Catholic University.[3] The professor of Latin there was Joseph Schrijnen, who was greatly interested in the influence of early Christianity on the classical languages, and who inspired Mohrmann to write her dissertation in that area of research under his supervision. Their approach to the field of 'ancient Christian Greek and Latin' became known as the 'École de Nimègue', the Nijmegen School, and received wide acclaim, both within the Netherlands and abroad. Schrijnen saw Mohrmann as his successor, but when he died relatively suddenly in 1938, it became apparent that the time was not yet ripe for a woman professor at the Catholic University.[4] In 1937,

1 I would like to thank Gerard Bartelink, Roald Dijkstra, Ton Hilhorst, Burcht Pranger, Vincent Hunink, and Onno Kneepkens for providing valuable information on the history of the Society and its context.

2 This biographical sketch is based on a Dutch entry by Toon Bastiaensen, one of Mohrmann's students: see A.A.R. Bastiaensen, 'Christine Mohrmann, 1903–1988, classica', in C.A.M. Gietman et al. (eds), *Biografisch Woordenboek Gelderland*, vol. 3 (Hilversum 2002), 97–99. In addition, I have made use of an excellent article on the life and work of Christine Mohrmann by Els Rose, 'Moved by Language: Christine Mohrmann (1903–1988) and the Study of Liturgical Latin', in Louis van Tongeren, Marcel Barnard, Paul Post, and Gerard Rouwhorst (eds), *Patterns and Persons. A Historiography of Liturgical Studies in the Netherlands in the Twentieth Century* (Leuven 2010), 371–392. Cf. also Marjet Derks and Saskia Verheesen-Stegeman, *Wetenschap als roeping. Prof dr Christine Mohrmann (1903–1988), classica* (Nijmegen 1998) and *In Memoriam Christinae Mohrmann, cuius anima in pace. Drie voordrachten tijdens de herdenkingsbijeenkomst te Nijmegen op 31 maart 1989 uitgesproken door L.J. Engels, G.J.M. Bartelink, A.A.R. Bastiaensen c.m.* (Nijmegen 1989).

3 The name of the Catholic University of Nijmegen was changed into 'Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen' (Radboud University) in 2004.

4 The matter was complex; see Rose, 'Moved by Language', 377.

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Mohrmann had accepted a position as assistant to the professor of Latin at the University of Utrecht, and she was promoted to the position of 'lector' there in 1943. In 1946 she also became 'lector' at the University of Amsterdam, and she received an 'extraordinary' professorship there in 1955. In 1947, she co-founded the journal *Vigiliae Christianae*[5] with Jan Hendrik Waszink († 1990), professor of Latin at Leiden University since 1946, Willem van Unnik († 1978) and Gilles Quispel († 2006), professors at the theological faculty of Utrecht University since 1947 and 1952 respectively.[6] In 1952, Mohrmann accepted an 'extraordinary' professorship in Ancient Christian Greek and Ancient Christian, Vulgar, and Medieval Latin at the Catholic University of Nijmegen; she eventually did become an *ordinarius* or full professor in Nijmegen—in 1961. This caused her to terminate her lectureship at Utrecht, but she retained her chair in Amsterdam until her retirement in 1973. During her career she supervised no fewer than 22 dissertations.[7] In addition, a number of her students went on to become professors themselves—in Groningen, Amsterdam, Utrecht and Nijmegen: Loek (Louk) Engels († 2017),[8] Jan Smit,[9] and Árpád Orbán.[10] Eventually, Orbán (as Gerard Bartelink's successor—see below) was the last incumbent in Mohrmann's chair in Nijmegen; it was decided after his retirement that the specialized areas of early Christian Greek and Latin as well as vulgar and medieval Latin would henceforth be covered jointly by the chairs of classical Greek and Latin. When Mohrmann finally obtained her professorships during the fifties, she was at the height of her international career, inspiring many students to specialize in early Christian Greek and Latin.

In 1959, some of these students began to meet to study early Christianity more intensively, and they became known as the 'Mohrmann Club'. One of the first members was Toon Bastiaensen († 2009), with Ton Hilhorst joining soon after. Students who had already graduated were also invited, such as Gerard

5 Initially published with the Noord Hollandsche Uitgevers, Brill in Leiden has been its publisher for decades.

6 Van Unnik was professor of New Testament and Ancient Christian Literature; Quispel was professor of Early Christian History. He was an expert on Gnosticism, esp. the *Gospel of Thomas*.

7 Many of these were published in two series founded by Joseph Schrijnen and Christine Mohrmann: *Latinitas christianorum primaeva* (1932) and *Graecitas christianorum primaeva* (1962).

8 Loek (Louk; Lodewijk Jozef) Engels was professor of Medieval Latin at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (RUG) from 1972 until his retirement in 1994.

9 Jan W. Smit succeeded Mohrmann at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) in 1973; he retired in 1996.

10 Árpád Orbán was first appointed professor at the University of Utrecht in 1980 and later at the Radboud University of Nijmegen (1992). He retired in 2009.

Bartelink, who had completed his PhD (1952) and who would eventually succeed Mohrmann as full professor in Nijmegen in 1973. All three went on to make important scholarly contributions to the study of early Christianity.[11] In 1962, the club became a *stichting* (foundation), a legal entity under Dutch law, named 'Stichting voor Oudchristelijke Studiën': Association for Ancient Christian Studies. It is now generally referred to as the 'Genootschap voor Oudchristelijke Studiën': Society for Early Christian Studies.[12] As 'early Christian' is a more common description in international scholarship than 'ancient Christian', the literal translation of 'oudchristelijk', this is the term that has been used in this volume.

Originally wholly a Nijmegen affair, the membership base of the Society broadened out in the course of the years. Connections were forged with important Flemish scholars such as Boudewijn Dehandschutter († 2011), professor at KU Leuven (the Catholic University of Leuven/Louvain). The Society also became more ecumenical as Protestant scholars joined, among them the prominent classicist Jan den Boeft († 2019). He was an active member who sat on the board for well over three decades (1982–2015), of which ten years as chair (1991–2001). In 1994, he was appointed professor of Latin (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) and from 1990 until 2014 he served as editor-in-chief of *Vigiliae Christianae*, including the *Supplementa* series. In the context of the Society for Early Christian Studies, he was involved in many inspiring projects, including conferences and resulting volumes of proceedings on early Christian poetry and the impact of Scripture in early Christianity (see below, the following section). Sadly, he passed away in the summer of 2019. We remember him with gratitude and affection, and dedicate this volume to his memory.[13]

---

11 Bastiaensen taught early Christian Latin at the Catholic University of Nijmegen until his retirement in 1991; Hilhorst worked as a lecturer and researcher at the Theological Faculty of Groningen University until his retirement in 2003. Together with C. Kneepkens, they edited a volume to mark Gerard Bartelink's retirement in 1989: A. Bastiaensen, A. Hilhorst, and C. Kneepkens (eds), *Fructus Centesimus. Mélanges offerts à Gerard J.M. Bartelink à l'occasion de son soixante-cinquième anniversaire*, Instrumenta Patristica 19 (Dordrecht 1989). A *Festschrift* was also presented to Toon Bastiaensen: G.J.M. Bartelink, A. Hilhorst, and C.H. Kneepkens (eds), *Eulogia. Mélanges offerts à Antoon A.R. Bastiaensen à l'occasion de son soixante-cinquième anniversaire*, Instrumenta Patristica 24 (The Hague 1991). Hilhorst, too, was the recipient of a *Festschrift*, on the occasion of his retirement: F. García Martínez and G.P. Luttikhuizen (eds), *Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome: Studies in Ancient Cultural Interaction in Honour of A. Hilhorst*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 82 (Leiden 2003).

12 See also www.oudchristelijkestudien.nl.

13 I thank Paula Rose for sharing the *In Memoriam* she presented during the fall session of 2019; an *In Memoriam* was also published in *Vigiliae Christianae*: 'In memoriam: Jan den Boeft (1935–2019)', *Vigiliae Christianae* 74 (2020), 1–3.

Jan den Boeft was succeeded in the chair by Willemien Otten (now University of Chicago), Riemer Roukema (Protestant Theological University), Gerard Rouwhorst (Emeritus, Tilburg School of Theology), and currently Nienke Vos (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam). But perhaps the most important development has been the increasingly interdisciplinary character of the group: over the years it has numbered among its members classicists, ancient historians, theologians, and archaeologists. Most members have written dissertations and are productive academically. While a good number of the members have been or still are affiliated with a university, others work as independent scholars. A final core characteristic that must be mentioned in this regard is the fact that many are or have been active in schools and churches as educators and pastors. Thus, the Society joins interdisciplinary research at a high standard with a serious commitment to society.

From the beginning, the members of the Society organized meetings to discuss topics pertaining to early Christianity; from Philo and Origen through Augustine and Egeria to the Byzantine tradition, Erasmus, and beyond.[14] They currently meet twice a year to attend presentations given both by established names in the field and by scholars who have recently defended their dissertations. There has also been a tradition to invite external speakers from the field of patristic studies for these sessions. In 1984, when the Society celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, the members decided to organize a conference, which took place in 1986. Since then, conferences have been held every five years. The intellectual fruits of these meetings were published in volumes of proceedings, the first in Dutch (Nijmegen),[15] the others in English, by the publishing house Brill (Leiden). They have covered the following topics: the cult of the saints,[16] early Christian poetry,[17] the impact of Scripture in early Christianity,[18] the apostolic age,[19] demons and the devil,[20] violence,[21] and—now—early Christian rituals.[22] A conference on the figure of Job in early Christianity is

14 See for a list of topics: https://www.oudchristelijkestudien.nl/vergaderingen_1.

15 A. Hilhorst (red.), *De heiligenverering in de eerste eeuwen van het christendom* (Nijmegen 1988).

16 See previous footnote.

17 J. den Boeft and A. Hilhorst (eds), *Early Christian Poetry*, VCS 20 (Leiden 1993).

18 J. den Boeft and M. van Poll-van de Lisdonk (eds), *The Impact of Scripture in Early Christianity*, VCS 44 (Leiden 1999).

19 A. Hilhorst (ed.), *The Apostolic Age in Patristic Thought*, VCS 70 (Leiden 2004).

20 Nienke Vos and Willemien Otten (eds), *Demons and the Devil in Ancient and Medieval Christianity*, VCS 108 (Leiden 2011).

21 Albert C. Geljon and Riemer Roukema (eds), *Violence in Ancient Christianity*, VCS 125 (Leiden 2014).

22 The *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Ritual*, edited by Risto Uro, Juliette J. Day, Rikard

planned for 2021.[23] The board generally decides on a theme, and a committee is then formed which produces a position paper. The programme is designed carefully, and is partly based on the expertise of the members themselves. To cover any lacunae, speakers are invited from outside the circle of the Society to address additional areas of research. A call for papers is sometimes issued, for instance to give PhD students the opportunity to present. This format leads to a collection of individual, specialized studies that are nevertheless tied together by a common theme and focus, as explained in the position paper that guides the conference presentations. These are then compiled to form a volume of proceedings edited by members of the board of the Society.

2 A Conference on Early Christian Rituals: Topic and Theoretical Framework

Once the topic of early Christian rituals was chosen for the 2016 conference, this was followed by a time of intensive study and reflection.[24] A working definition of ritual was drawn up that is similar to the one described in chapter 3 of this volume, Rianne Voogd's contribution on the holy kiss. Following Ronald Grimes, Voogd defines ritual as a practice that incorporates the elements of repetition, a (recognizable) pattern, communality, and physicality.[25] In a sense, all human behaviour is fundamentally ritualized, and anyone who wishes to study ritual must therefore from the outset be alert to the dimension of everyday

Roitto, and Richard E. DeMaris (Oxford 2018), had not yet been published when the contributions to this volume were finalized. The *Oxford Handbook* opens with an elaborate section on theory, which is followed by a part on ritual settings and practices from the perspective of Mediterranean antiquity in general. The focus then shifts to the more specific context of 'nascent Christianity', after which ritual traditions within the increasingly established 'ancient church' are addressed. The various contributions mainly present surveys of important topics such as meals, pilgrimage, and prayer. While inevitably some overlap exists between the *Handbook* and our own volume, this book sets itself apart in terms both of methodological concerns and topic selection by presenting a collection of *case studies* that are informed primarily by the notion of *transformation* in the context of *specific sources*. Unlike the *Handbook*, they also take into account the *reception history* of certain ritual traditions, examining, for instance, later developments in both Judaism and Islam.

23 See also the website of the Society: https://www.oudchristelijkestudien.nl/stichting.ocs.

24 I thank Gerard Rouwhorst for permitting me to use the position paper he wrote for the conference as one of the sources for this section.

25 See chapter 3 of this volume: Rianne Voogd, 'Is the Instruction to Greet One Another with a Holy Kiss a Pauline Transformation?', section 3: 'Was the Greeting with a Holy Kiss a Ritual?' (cf. esp. footnotes 37 and 38).

life. Human life is defined by birth and death, by harvesting and the consumption of food, by the celebration of feasts, by the notion of physical as well as spiritual growth, by gestures of greeting and other types of social interaction, by deep emotions of fear and love, aggression and jealousy, by the desire for power, by the tendency to discriminate between social groups, etc. etc. In the context of early Christianity, and especially within the communal sphere of the institutional church, these fundamental aspects of human society take on a specific colour, expressed by a range of rituals. In this volume of conference proceedings, then, the term 'ritual' is understood in a broad sense. It applies to liturgical celebrations that were held in church buildings from the third and fourth centuries onwards, but also to actions that were performed in other settings, such as the home and pilgrimage sites. Thus, early Christian rituals are situated in a variety of contexts: daily life, the Christian community, and the liturgy. Often, these ritual contexts are interrelated, for instance when a familiar gesture like the kiss acquires new meaning in the Christian congregation. Mostly, the rituals examined are discussed on the basis of textual sources that describe them. But attention is also paid to the material dimensions of ritual practice, in relation—for instance—to burial, ecclesiastical dress, and the building of churches.

Given both the design of the conference and the necessity of ensuring the coherence of the subsequent proceedings, it was decided to adopt a specific approach to early Christian rituals, a focus on their *dynamic* character. This was exemplified in the original title of the conference: 'Traditions and Transformation: Rituals in Early Christianity'. The combined notions of 'tradition' and 'transformation' were intended to express the complex dynamics involved. One way of looking at the development of early Christianity is to visualize it as a nodal 'point' in history where pre-existing traditions that influenced its formation met, for instance Greek and Roman religion as well as Judaism. These traditions fed into Christianity as it evolved, playing a complex role in its formation and contributing to it, while being themselves transformed in the process. In the ancient world, then, the rise and expansion of Christianity led to profound social, cultural, and religious transformations. These in turn affected later developments, not only in Eastern and Western Christianity itself, but also in Judaism and Islam. Rituals, specifically, represent significant manifestations of this kind of societal change. On the one hand, they *reflect* the processes of social, cultural, and religious change, but on the other, they *drive* the formation of religious traditions, including complex dynamics of reception. This is also true for early Christianity. Early Christian rituals were not created or designed in a vacuum. Rather, they came into existence and developed—at least in part—through the acquisition and appropriation of non-Christian rit-

uals that were interpreted in the context of Christian theology, receiving new functions within early Christian communities. This dynamic of transformation continued in the later phases of Christianity, as responses to and interactions with earlier developments continued to take place. Thus, the contributions in this volume are all informed by this double perspective: an interest in the origins of certain rituals (where did they come from?), but even more so in their transformations (what happened to them?).

This perspective is embedded in the historical and methodological analysis presented in chapter 1, which functions as the theoretical framework for the volume as a whole. In this chapter, Gerard Rouwhorst describes the paradigm shift that is brought about by converging developments in research on early Christianity, more specifically the liturgy, and the field of ritual studies. This shift is expressed on different levels, including a variety of often interrelated aspects. For example, the source material that this new paradigm seeks to examine is much broader; apart from the so-called orthodox texts, less normative literature is increasingly being included, such as Gnostic, apocryphal, and apotropaic writings. In addition, material culture has come to occupy a more prominent place as the object of research. This ties in with another important dimension, that of performance. When rituals are studied in a context that is sensitive to issues of re-enactment, a multitude of elements come into view, such as spatial setting, including church architecture and visual art, as well as the significance of bodily actions and sensory experience. In this regard, it is also necessary to consider newly designed methods such as, for example CSR, the Cognitive Science of Religion. Such methodological developments are also taking place in linguistics, for instance within the field of discourse linguistics. Finally, the new paradigm moves away from the preoccupation with origins, directing attention instead towards the transformation of traditions and the dynamic shaping of communities, including identity formation and the setting of boundaries.

3 The Structure of the Volume: Order and Summary of Contributions

As indicated above, all contributions in this volume have been inspired by the new paradigm that is defined in chapter 1. Rouwhorst shows that this paradigm is *both* multi-layered, relating to the selection of sources as well as to the inclusion of new methodologies, *and* interconnected. Such interconnections are explored more fully in the closing contribution. At this point, I will briefly sketch the outline of the volume, pointing out the rationale for the order in which the chapters appear. Essentially, the editors have opted for a sequence

that creates an element of *flow*, which makes it possible to draw imaginative connections between the chapters—even if the topics are quite diverse.[26]

In the opening chapter, Rouwhorst examines overarching theoretical concerns, and in chapter 2 the same author illustrates the relevance of the new paradigm by discussing the history of three fundamental and festive ritual traditions in early Christianity: Passover, the Jerusalem liturgy of pilgrimage, and the Epiphany. Chapter 3 is the first of a chronological series that begins with the New Testament: Rianne Voogd discusses the Pauline command to greet one another with the holy kiss, and she asks whether the bodily gesture of the holy kiss can be viewed as a ritual transformation. Next in line are the Apocryphal Gospels, traditionally regarded as heterodox sources, but revalued in the new paradigm as legitimate objects of study. Jan Bremmer discusses them as literature that contains important clues for the multifaceted development of meal rituals in early Christianity (chapter 4). Hans van Loon's contribution (chapter 5) brings us to the early fifth century, examining the work of Cyril of Alexandria and considering his use of mystery language. Taking the terminology of the mystery cults as a starting point, van Loon moves back in time to the ancient cult at Eleusis, tracking developments in mythical expression, ritual performance, and metaphorical application. His analysis teases out the implications of both the old and the new paradigm. The author systematically works his way through the centuries, coming full circle and arriving at an eye-opening conclusion. From the linguistic analysis of a Greek church father's work on initiation, we move to the rhetorical analysis of a Latin church father and his writings on an entirely different ritual sphere: remembrance of the dead. Looking at text type and genre, Paula Rose analyses Augustine's evaluation and transformation of traditions surrounding the commemoration meal (chapter 6). This is then followed by Jutta Dresken-Weiland's assessment of material sources concerning Christian burial, concentrating on both inscriptions and visual art (chapter 7). A focus on the material aspect is also central to Karel Innemée's contribution, which traces the origins, development, and social functions of ecclesiastical dress in a variety of settings, including the liturgy and the monastic tradition (chapter 8). These contexts of church and monastery form the background to Joop van Waarden's and Nienke Vos' chapters respectively, which both address issues relating to penitence and conscience. We first move further afield as van Waarden discusses the 'Gallic Rogations', a collective atonement ritual, perhaps originally connected to ancient harvest traditions. He uses the perspective of CSR, Cognitive Science of Reli-

26 Compare also the concluding chapter of this volume.

gion, a new methodology based on specific cognitive functions of the brain, to shed light on this topic (chapter 9). From the everyday life of church communities in Gaul we then circle back to the monastic settlements of Egypt and their pastoral traditions, taking a more individual perspective. Starting from that nodal point, Vos traces the early movements of spiritual formation, in both Greek philosophy and early Christianity, before moving forward in time, pursuing the transformation of monastic models of pastoral care in the more distant contexts of Ireland and early medieval Europe (chapter 10). Jacques van der Vliet's contribution also deals with early Christian Egypt and all aspects of the new paradigm converge in his chapter. Van der Vliet discusses 'magical' texts, and argues that the textual and material dimensions of these are of equal significance, as they function in the context of performing rituals to control harmful and beneficial powers in everyday situations. In doing so, he deconstructs the neat and sanitized distinctions between 'orthodox' and 'heretical', between popular culture and the ecclesiastical elite. As van der Vliet examines the complex formation and transformation of these writings, he considers discontinuities and continuities from a *longue durée* perspective, discussing long lines of reception that reach into the twenty-first century (chapter 11). Issues of reception are also central to the two contributions that address the other two Abrahamic religions: Judaism and Islam. A chapter on Judaism is included because it is representative of a religious tradition that played a crucial role in the formation of Christianity and that is still alive today, allowing us to compare developments in these two religions. In his contribution, Leon Mock addresses the theme of apotropaic ritual, signalling an important social function: the setting of boundaries (chapter 12). The penultimate contribution to the volume moves from the private to the public, as Mariëtte Verhoeven analyses the church building of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople/Istanbul. She addresses processes of transformation within Christianity, such as the watershed at the time of the Crusaders, but also describes the major transition that took place in 1453, when the church was taken over by the Muslims, who transformed it into a mosque. The twentieth-century transformation of the Hagia Sophia into a secular museum was reversed in July 2020: the building is once again officially a mosque (chapter 13).

4 To Conclude

On the whole, it is possible to view the different contributions in *pairs*, with van der Vliet's article functioning as a summative hinge between Christianity and the other two Abrahamic religions. After Rouwhorst's two opening chap-

ters, which form the first pair, Voogd and Bremmer address the earliest phases of the Christian tradition: the first and second centuries. Taking an explicitly linguistic perspective, van Loon and Rose discuss two 'pillars of the church', representatives of the Greek and Latin world respectively. Subsequently, Dresken-Weiland and Innemée both focus on the material aspects of early Christian culture. Van Waarden and Vos share an interest in spiritual formation and experience, with a specific focus on penitence. Van der Vliet's contribution reflects all aspects of the leading paradigm, providing a transition to the last pair on Judaism and Islam. While there are clear connections between the articles presented here as pairs, there are also links between the different pairs as such, for instance between Rose's and Dresken-Weiland's chapters, which both discuss burial traditions. Similarly, van Loon and Vos share the digital tool of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. Bremmer and van der Vliet both use sources that were long considered marginal, while van der Vliet and Mock address apotropaic issues. Thus, this volume shows a rich variety of interconnections, which are discussed more elaborately in the closing contribution. It is clear that the different contributors analyse their material on the basis of their personal expertise, thereby creating an array of methodologies and sources: these are the 'New Perspectives' of this volume. Their diversity, however, is tied together by the paradigm that was summarized above and that is explained more fully in the opening chapter.

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CHAPTER 1

A Paradigm Shift in the Study of Early Christian Rituals: Methodological Perspectives

Gerard Rouwhorst

The study of early Christian rituals boasts a long and impressive research tradition. For several centuries now they have aroused the interest of liturgical scholars who were mostly affiliated with ecclesiastical, especially Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Anglican traditions that attached great importance to 'liturgy' and were interested in its early Christian origins and roots. However, liturgical scholars were certainly not the only ones to study early Christian rituals. Ritual issues were also frequently addressed by scholars who belonged to the so-called History of Religion School (*Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*), who were particularly interested in the ritual life of early Christianity, more so than in its theological doctrines, and also in its links with the pre-Christian cults of the Hellenistic world, especially the so-called mystery cults.[1] Rituals were also a central theme in many studies on early Christian church architecture and iconography. The publications by the Franz Joseph Dölger-Institut and especially the numerous volumes of the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* should be mentioned in particular. Finally, the fact that most handbooks and histories of early Christianity[2] include one or more chapters on early Christian liturgy demonstrates that the study of early Christian

1 Cf. R. Uro, *Ritual and Christian Beginnings. A Socio-Cognitive Analysis* (Oxford 2016), 9–13. Cf. for the History of Religion School for instance C. Colpe, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule. Darstellung und Kritik eines Bildes vom Erlösermythos* (Göttingen 1961); G. Lüdemann and M. Schröder, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule in Göttingen* (Göttingen 1987). Cf. for the influence ascribed to the 'mystery cults' J. Bremmer, *Initiation into the Mysteries of the Ancient World* (Berlin/Boston 2014), 142–165.

2 See for a recent example S.A. Harvey and D.G. Hunter (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford 2008), in particular the chapters about Christian initiation by M.E. Johnson (691–710), eucharistic liturgy by S. Sheerin (711–743), prayer by C. Stewart (744–763), penance by A. Fitzgerald (786–807), martyrdom and the cult of the martyrs by R. Price (808–825) and pilgrimage by G. Frank (826–841); M.M. Mitchell and F.M. Young (eds), *The Cambridge History of Christianity, vol. 1: Origins to Constantine* (Cambridge 2006), 159–169 (ten pages about worship and ritual by W. Meeks); A. Casiday and F.W. Norris, *The Cambridge History of Christianity, vol. 2: Constantine to c. 600* (Cambridge 2007), 601–617 (about the development of the liturgy and the ecclesiastical year by B. Spinks).

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rituals is generally considered to be an essential part of historical research on early Christianity.

In the last few decades there has been ongoing interest in early Christian rituals. However, the angles from which these are approached have considerably changed in comparison with most of the monographs and articles on liturgical topics published in earlier periods. It is no exaggeration to speak of a paradigm shift. The change and broadening of perspective is related to developments that have taken place and are taking place in both the research on early Christianity and the study of rituals, which are converging in a remarkable way.[3] On the one hand, remarkable shifts can be observed in the perspectives from which scholars approach and study the world of early Christianity. This is for a considerable part related to the fact that a great number of the scholars engaged in this research are classicists and historians of antiquity who have no (direct) affiliation to churches or theological faculties. Contrary to many of the liturgical scholars from earlier generations who were theologically trained, they are not (strongly) concerned with theological and ecclesiastical questions. That is one of the reasons why an increasing interest in the social and cultural dimensions of early Christianity can be discerned and, as a result, in theoretical approaches and methodological tools derived from the social sciences and from cultural studies. Terms like 'linguistic turn'[4] and 'cultural turn'[5] have been used to characterize the shifts that have been taking place, and in line with general trends in the humanities, in particular the study of anthropology and history, a growing interest in material culture can be discerned.[6] (See the contributions by Dresken, Innemée, and Verhoeven). Apropos of 'turns', I cannot remember having come across the term 'social turn' in publications dealing with early Christianity, but there are definitely very strong influences from the fields of social sciences and social history.[7] These trends concur strikingly with recent developments in the study of rituals. Traditional paradigms that were followed by representatives of the 'phenomenology of religion' and historians

3 Cf., for instance, E.A. Clark, 'From Patristics to Early Christian Studies' in Harvey and Hunter, *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, 7–41.

4 Cf. E.A. Clark, *History, Theory, Text. Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Cambridge MA/London 2004).

5 D.B. Martin and P.C. Miller (eds), *The Cultural Turn. Gender, Asceticism, Historiography* (Durham/London 2005).

6 See for instance the contributions of M. Humphries, 'Material Evidence (1): Archaeology' and R. Jensen 'Material Evidence (2): Visual Culture' in Harvey and Hunter, *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, 87–103 (Humphries) and 104–119 (Jensen).

7 For the increasing interest in the social dimensions of early Christianity see for instance Clark, 'From Patristics to Early Christian Studies'.

of religions with a strong philological interest are increasingly being replaced by approaches borrowed from a variety of disciplines that are concerned with cultural and social dimensions of society, whereas rituals, for their part, have generated a marked interest among leading figures in the fields of social sciences, linguistics as well as cultural and religious studies.[8] This has resulted in remarkable and innovative forms of interdisciplinary research, and in the formation of a broad interdisciplinary platform which is often designated by the term 'ritual studies'. This designation does not refer to a well-demarcated academic discipline but indicates a field of research in which common research issues are explored, theories are developed, and new perspectives are opened up that are relevant for the study of a very broad spectrum of rituals and ritual activities in a great variety of societies and cultures.[9]

To provide an insight in the shifts that have been taking place in the last few centuries I will first outline older research on early Christian liturgy and the methodological principles on which it was based. Then I will point to some recent, partly concurring trends in the study of rituals that open up new and stimulating perspectives for research on the history of early Christian rituals.

1 The Traditional Paradigm

Anyone who browses through the huge number of titles that were published during the twentieth century on the history of early Christian rituals and takes just a quick look at their contents,[10] will soon discover that they share a number of basic principles and assumptions, and this warrants reference to a specific 'research paradigm'.[11]

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8 See for an overview of the research paradigms used in the studies on rituals as well as their developments in the twentieth century up to the most recent period C. Bell, *Ritual. Perspectives and Dimensions* (New Edition, Oxford 2009).

9 See for this research platform the *Journal of Ritual Studies*, various publications by R.L. Grimes, especially his books *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (Revised Edition, Columbia SC 1995) and *The Craft of Ritual Studies* (Oxford 2014) and further P. Post, 'Ritual Studies', in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (online edition 2014; http://religion.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-21) and P. Post, 'Panorama der Ritual Studies. Trends und Themen der aktuellen Ritual Studies', *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 55 (2013), 139–181.

10 The term 'twentieth century' should not be understood very strictly. The origins of the paradigm go back to earlier centuries, at least to the seventeenth centuries (see for instance the works of the Maurists). On the other hand, what I have called the 'traditional paradigm' was already being questioned and criticized in the 1980s and 1990s.

11 Cf. for the following remarks my articles 'Neue Sichtweisen auf die liturgischen Traditio-

a. The majority of the studies deal with the liturgical traditions of what was considered to be mainstream Christianity, that is, Christian communities whose theological views were in line with orthodoxy as it would be formulated by the fourth- and fifth-century ecumenical councils.[12] This option was reflected in the selection of the sources that were generally taken from what the German liturgical historian Gabriele Winkler had called the 'grosskirchliche Angebot' (the 'offer of the Great Church').[13] Sources that were considered to be 'Jewish Christian', 'Gnostic', or 'Manichaean' were only rarely taken into consideration. This also applied to writings whose orthodoxy was considered doubtful or out of step with generally accepted ideas of what Christian liturgy actually is and how it should be performed. Examples of sources that were therefore largely ignored were the *Didache* and apocryphal writings, especially the apocryphal Acts of the apostles.[14]

The effect of this selection procedure was that a picture emerged of a homogeneous early Christian liturgy, which since its beginning in the New Testament period evolved organically and smoothly into the liturgical patterns of the fourth century that were at the basis of the liturgical practices of the later Eastern and Western Churches.[15]

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nen des frühen Christentums', *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 67 (2017), 209–236 (This is a German translation of my valedictory lecture at Tilburg University). Cf. also G. Rouwhorst, 'L'autorité et la reconstruction de la liturgie paléo-chrétienne', in A. Lossky and G. Sekulovski (eds), *60 Semaines liturgiques à Saint-Serge. Bilans et perspectives nouvelles. 60e Semaine d'études liturgiques Paris, Institut Saint-Serge, 24–27 juin 2013* (Münster 2016), 13–28.

12 See for instance the following handbooks of liturgical studies and liturgical history: *Gottesdienst der Kirche: Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft* (Regensburg 1983–2008); A. Chupungco (ed.), *Handbook for Liturgical Studies* (Collegeville 1997–1999; 5 vols); G. Wainwright and K.B. Westerfield Tucker (eds), *The Oxford History of Christian Worship* (Oxford 2006). Numerous other examples could be mentioned.

13 G. Winkler, 'Weitere Beobachtungen zur frühen Epiklese (den Doxologien und dem Sanctus). Über die Bedeutung der Apokryphen für die Erforschung der Entwicklung der Riten', *Oriens Christianus* 80 (1996), 177–200, esp. 177.

14 One of the rare and remarkable exceptions was Hans Lietzmann's book *Messe und Herrenmahl. Eine Studie zur Geschichte der Liturgie*. (Berlin 1926). English translation: *Mass and Lord's Supper. A Study in the History of the Liturgy* (Leiden 1979), which made ample use of the *Didache* and the apocryphal Acts of the apostles for his reconstruction of the development of early Christian rituals. Another remarkable 'outsider' in this respect was Erik Peterson (1890–1960). Cf. B. Nichtweiss, *Erik Peterson. Neue Sicht auf Leben und Werk* (Freiburg 1992) and G. Caronello (ed.), *Erik Peterson. Die theologische Präsenz eines Outsiders* (Berlin 2012); see in the latter volume especially the contributions by A. Gerhards (459–474), G. Rouwhorst (475–492) and G. Visonà (493–510).

15 Cf. for a critique of this view which was long widely accepted: G. Rouwhorst, 'Vielfalt vom Anfang an. Pluriformität in der Liturgiegeschichte', *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 57 (2015), 1–23.

b. There has been a strong emphasis on the reconstruction of *prescribed* rituals. To employ terms derived from the world of theatre, most studies dealt with scenarios, scripts, and much less with the actual performance and the way in which the rituals were perceived and experienced by the participants. In part this may be due to the fact that many of the available sources, especially the so-called 'church orders' (*Didascalia*; the document that is usually designated by the term 'Apostolic Tradition' etc.) and writings of church fathers, contain information about the way in which the rituals *should* be performed and very little about the ways in which the rituals *were actually* performed. However, this emphasis on ritual scenarios is not only due to the character of the available sources but also to the selection made by the scholars from these sources, a selection based on the perspective from which they were studied. It is striking that little attention was generally paid to sources that provide at least a glimpse of the actual practice, which might deviate from the ritual scenarios or the ideal performances, or to practices that were (and at times still are) often subsumed under the debatable categories of 'popular piety', 'popular religiosity', or 'magic', which would produce a different picture.

c. In general, the focus of research was primarily on the study of *verbal elements*: Biblical texts that were read or recited, the texts of prayers, songs. By contrast, the non-verbal elements of the rituals and, in particular, the ways in which they were enacted, recited, and sung, and especially the bodily gestures and movements, received less attention. Significantly, little notice was taken of the spatial setting of the rituals, especially the church building. Illustrative in this regard are the numerous studies devoted to the eucharistic prayers, the anaphoras. Most of these studies are almost exclusively concerned with the texts, with their structure and theological content, and do not address the question how, that is in what spatial setting and with what non-verbal forms of expression (in the absence of microphones), they were recited, nor do they raise the question whether and to what degree people were even able to hear any of the texts that were recited. Incidentally, the non-verbal elements were not just a blind spot for many of the scholars. There is clear evidence that many of them had a negative view of these elements or at least considered them to be of secondary importance compared to the words and their meanings. Tellingly, it was often suggested that these elements had crept in at a later stage of the evolution of the rites and diverted the interpretation from the original and true meaning expressed by the texts.[16] This also explains why non-literary sources, such as church architecture, visual art (frescoes, mosaics), and other material

16 This is particularly evident in a number of studies regarding the Roman blessing of the baptismal water. Cf. G. Rouwhorst, 'Baumstark's Methodology in Practice: Histori-

elements were rather rarely taken into consideration by scholars of early Christian liturgy. The study of iconographic and archaeological sources was mostly left to scholars who were specialized in these fields and who, for their part, were often not much interested in the ritual settings in which the objects of their research might have functioned.[17]

d. Many studies on early Christian liturgy were concerned with the *symbolic* and *theological meanings* of the liturgical rituals and especially of their texts. What theological messages did they convey? What symbolic associations did they evoke? With what theological currents were they affiliated? This preoccupation with 'meaning' can be found particularly among scholars with a theological background and interest who considered liturgy as the '*lex orandi*' to be an important source of (orthodox) theology, the '*lex credendi*'. However, it also prominently features in studies by scholars who pursued a more literary or linguistic approach and were primarily concerned with the vocabulary used in early Christian writings, the meaning of important keywords. Special mention should be made here of the works by Christine Mohrmann and many of her disciples who wrote monographs and articles about Latin words and terms used in early Christianity and their specific Christian connotations.[18]

e. Many scholars who dealt with early Christian liturgy were primarily concerned with the reconstruction of *diachronic* processes and were, more particularly, very much intrigued by the origins and the earliest phases of rituals. For a long time, the method of comparative liturgy developed by the orientalist and

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cal Research on the Blessing of Baptismal Water in the Roman Liturgy' in R.E. Taft and G. Winkler (eds), *Comparative liturgy fifty years after Anton Baumstark (1872–1948): acts of the international congress, Rome, 25–29 September 1998*. Orientalia Christiana Analecta 265 (Rome 2001), 963–980.

17 It should be noted that there were remarkable exceptions and examples of cross-fertilization between the study of liturgy on the one hand and disciplines that focused on early Christian visual art, church architecture, material culture on the other. Mention should be made in particular of the publications by the Franz-Joseph Dölger Institute in Bonn, especially the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, and the Pontifical Institute of Christian Archaeology in Rome. An example of an individual scholar who had a clear eye for the interconnectedness of liturgy, church architecture, and iconography was Frits van der Meer (1904–1994); he taught Christian Archaeology and Liturgy at the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands.

18 See in particular the collected essays by Christine Mohrmann: C. Mohrmann, *Études sur le latin des chrétiens* I–IV. Storia e letteratura 65, 87, 103, 143 (Rome 1958–1977). Cf. for Mohrmann's work Els Rose, 'Moved by language. Christine Mohrmann (1903–1988) and the study of liturgical Latin', in L. van Tongeren et al. (eds), *Patterns and Persons. A Historiography of Liturgical Studies in the Netherlands in the Twentieth Century*. Liturgia condenda 25 (Leuven/Paris/Walpole MA 2010), 371–392.

liturgical scholar Anton Baumstark (1872–1948) was especially popular among liturgical historians.[19] By studying varieties of liturgical rituals in Eastern and Western Christian traditions and by comparing these in terms of differences and commonalities, scholars attempted to reconstruct the oldest nuclei, the primitive strata upon which these varieties were based. Once this had been done, the purpose was to trace the pre-Christian roots of the rituals concerned. No longer satisfied by the answers given by traditional sacramental theology, which claimed that these rituals had been instituted by Jesus Christ or the apostles, such scholars looked for their origins in a variety of pre-Christian rituals. Certain scholars tried to identify links with pagan traditions, for instance, with the so-called mystery cults.[20] (Compare the chapter by van Loon.) In the decades following the Second World War there was an increasing tendency to trace back the origins of the major Christian rituals, such as baptism, the Eucharist, Passover, and Pentecost as well as the liturgical reading of the Bible, to Jewish roots.[21] In the last few decades, the tendency has been, on the one hand, to question this approach or at least to put it into perspective,[22] and, on the other, to take a growing interest in the Greco-Roman background of early Christian liturgical meetings, with a crucial role being ascribed to Greco-Roman meal practices, especially the banquets, symposia that were very common in the entire Mediterranean area among Greeks, Romans, Jews, and also among Christians.[23]

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19 See especially Baumstark's book *Vom geschichtlichen Werden der Liturgie*. Ecclesia orans 10 (Freiburg 1923; reprint: Darmstadt 1971). English translation with introduction and annotations by F. West: *On the Historical Development of the Liturgy* (Minnesota 2011); A. Baumstark, *Liturgie comparée* (Chevetogne 1953). For Baumstark's works and their background and impact see also: Taft and Winkler, *Comparative liturgy fifty years after Anton Baumstark*.

20 This holds true in particular for representatives of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (see above) but also for the Benedictine monk Odo Casel (1886–1948). Cf. for the works and views of Casel: A. Schilson, *Theologie als Sakramententheologie. Die Mysterientheologie Odo Casels* (Mainz 1987^2).

21 See for an overview of the different theories G. Rouwhorst, 'Christlicher Gottesdienst und der Gottesdienst Israels, Forschungsgeschichte, historische Interaktionen, Theologie', in M. Klöckener, A. Häussling and R. Messner (eds), *Theologie des Gottesdienstes. Gottesdienst der Kirche. Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft* Teil 2, Band 2 (Regensburg 2008), 493–572.

22 See, in particular, P. Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship. Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy* (Revised and enlarged edition: London 2002); C. Leonhard, *The Jewish Pesach and the Origins of the Christian Easter*. Studia Judaica 35 (Berlin/New York 2006).

23 See in particular M. Klinghardt, *Gemeinschaftsmahl und Mahlgemeinschaft. Soziologie und Liturgie frühchristlicher Mahlfeiern* (Tübingen/Basel 1996); C. Leonhard and B. Eckhardt,

f. The paradigm as it has been sketched and the choice of these research foci was strongly influenced by the ecclesiastical and theological backgrounds and interests of the liturgical scholars concerned and, more precisely, by the ideals of the liturgical reform movements in the twentieth century which aimed to return to the liturgical traditions of the early church as they imagined them. Their theological and liturgical views have formed an important stimulus for research on early Christian rituals, but at the same time have unavoidably coloured the ways in which they were perceived and reconstructed (as of course any paradigm will).

2 New Perspectives on the Study of Rituals

There can be no doubt that many of the publications based on the principles sketched above have made a valuable and lasting contribution to the study of early Christian liturgy, and they cannot be simply dismissed as obsolete. It is still relevant to have insight in the verbal aspects of prescribed rituals that were practiced by orthodox and proto-orthodox Christian communities, and it remains important to realize that early Christian rituals had their roots in pre-Christian traditions (Christian theologians especially are easily tempted to overlook or play down the importance of this fact). In addition, we owe to the liturgical scholarship of the preceding centuries and its concern with prescribed rituals and authoritative sources (church fathers) an impressive number of reliable critical editions of sources, not only in Latin and Greek, but also in Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Georgian, and Ethiopian. Furthermore, knowledge of the connotations of early Christian vocabulary is an important precondition for correctly interpreting the sources. As to the concern with often very sophisticated theological discussions, it simply cannot be denied that these played a prominent role in early Christianity and that there was an ongoing interaction between dogmas and theology on the one hand, and liturgy on the other. It is also beyond doubt that the '*lex orandi*' had a strong impact on the development of early Christian theological ideas and doctrines. Thanks to the work of scholars who have studied these issues, our insight in the history of early Christian rituals has improved considerably. Nonetheless, I would like to argue that the study of these rituals can benefit much from integrating new perspectives, in particular those that are derived from social sciences, cultural studies,

'Mahl V (Kultmahl)', *RAC* 23 (2010), 1012–1105; V. Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering*. VCS 102 (Leiden/Boston 2010); H.J. de Jonge, 'The Origins of the Sunday Eucharist', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 92 (2016), 549–579.

and ritual studies, into the prevailing research design. This may contribute to the construction of a more complex, dynamic, and varied picture of these rituals and their development. That is why I will now point to some of the crucial insights offered by these disciplines that have a particular relevance for the study of early Christian liturgy.[24]

a. In general, social scientists and scholars in cultural and ritual studies select the rituals they study and the sources they use on the basis of other criteria than liturgical scholars who studied early Christian rituals usually did in the past. Orthodoxy or conformity to religious mainstream currents or traditions approved by religious authorities are not considered to be a valid criterion of selection. Although ideas and assumptions about the supposed relevance for various religious and non-religious issues may sometimes play a role, they are mostly not to the fore. In general, scholars will try to be as inclusive as possible in the choice of their sources and rituals, and they have a keen eye for those rituals that are considered marginal, 'popular', or even suspect by religious authorities.

For the study of early Christian rituals, this means that it will no longer be possible to limit research to ritual traditions derived from orthodox or proto-orthodox communities. Hitherto neglected ritual traditions, such as those practiced by heterodox (Gnostic, Manichaean, Jewish Christian etc.) communities or those that seem hard to reconcile with commonly accepted ideas about what did and did not belong to Christian proto-orthodoxy (or mainstream Christianity) will have to receive as much attention as traditions with which members of twenty-first century churches feel familiar.[25] Moreover, the research should not be limited to what happened within the walls of church buildings, but should also include processions in the streets of the cities, meetings at graveyards outside the city walls and the tombs of the martyrs, as well as rituals that many modern Christians consider to be magical, such as exorcisms and ritual healings performed by monks in the desert.

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24 My ideas converge on many points with those that have recently been formulated by other scholars. I want to mention in particular R. Messner, 'Über einige Aufgaben bei der Erforschung der Liturgiegeschichte der frühen Kirche', *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft. Jubiläumsband. Liturgie Verstehen* 50 (2008), 207–230; W. Mayer 'The Changing Shape of Liturgy: From Earliest Christianity to the End of Late Antiquity', in T. Berger and B. Spinks (eds), *Liturgy's Imagined Past. Methodologies and Materials in the Writing of Liturgical History Today* (Collegeville 2016), 275–302.

25 Cf. Messner, 'Über einige Aufgaben', 222–229 (n. 24). See also Rouwhorst, 'L'autorité et la reconstruction', 17–19 (n. 11). Cf. for the research that has been conducted in this field in the last few decades: H. Buchinger, 'Liturgy and Early Christian Apocrypha', in A. Gregory, T. Nicklas, C.M. Tuckett and J. Verheyden (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Apocrypha* (Oxford 2015), 361–377.

Needless to say, all this will involve a considerable augmentation of the data and source material. Sources that have long been neglected, such as the *Didache*, apocryphal Acts and Gospels, Gnostic and even Manichaean texts, but also hagiographical sources will have to receive at least as much attention as the writings of church fathers and the so-called church orders to which apostolic authority was assigned. (See the contributions by Bremmer, van der Vliet, Vos, and Rose.)

b. Recent studies on rituals that have been written by social scientists or from a ritual studies perspective consider rituals as forms of bodily behaviour.[26] Contrary to what is implicitly or explicitly assumed by many liturgical scholars with a theological background, but also by other scholars who consider religion as a matter of beliefs rather than practices, it is emphasized that rituals are not primarily meant to transmit beliefs or ideas. Performing rituals or taking part in them is first of all a matter of *doing* something. Therefore, the research focus should not primarily be on the contents and meanings of the texts that are spoken, but on the way the participants use their bodies, on their attitudes, gestures, movements, on the non-verbal dimensions of the words that are said, recited or sung, on the appeal that is made to the senses by sounds, visual and olfactory elements, and on the spatial setting in which the rituals are performed. As a rule, these non-verbal elements evoke associations in the participants, but these have no precise and clearly defined meanings. Rather, they are open to multiple interpretations and in many cases, the aspect of believing or not-believing is not considered to be important.

This insight is particularly important for a better understanding of the non-Christian rituals of Greeks, Romans and Jews (especially those that took place in the Temple of Jerusalem before the rise of the synagogue). John Scheid, who is one of the most prominent specialists of Roman religion, has written a book on Roman sacrifices entitled '*Quand faire, c'est croire*',[27] that is, 'When doing is believing', or perhaps 'When believing is doing'. The title is emblematic for the attitude of Romans and Greeks towards rituals. Rituals involve meanings, but these are implied in the doing, in the ritual acts. One might object that at least in Christianity things were different, that Christianity was an exception,[28] that the rise of Christianity coincided with a different type of religion in which a strong emphasis was placed on the exegesis of the Bible, as was also the case in post-Temple Judaism, and upon the formulation of correct and orthodox beliefs. This, however, should not lead us to minimize the importance

26 Cf. for this issue in particular C. Bell, *Ritual Theory. Ritual Practice* (Oxford 1992).

27 J. Scheid, *Quand faire, c'est croire: les rites sacrificiels des Romains* (Paris 2005).

28 Thus, for instance, P. Veyne, *L'empire gréco-romain* (Paris 2005), 529–534.

of bodily behaviour and sensory experiences for early Christian rituals,[29] nor to assume that the meaning of the rituals could be reduced to the meanings that were ascribed to them by the ecclesiastical leaders and the religious elites. (Compare the chapters by Voogd and van Waarden.)

c. In her authoritative book on rituals, Catherine Bell has offered a comprehensive overview of the most influential approaches used by the various categories of scholars who have been engaged in the study of rituals for over a century. She distinguishes three major tendencies.[30] First, an older group of scholars was primarily concerned with questions related to the historical origins of rituals, and especially 'ritual' as a universal human phenomenon. One of the most debated questions concerned the historical primacy of rite versus myth. How did the origins of rites relate to those of myths? Did rites originate as reenactments of myths or were ritual activities the source of myths?[31] Recently, theories concerning the origins of rites in relation to the evolution of religion as a human universal phenomenon have lost much of their once very preponderant influence. Most scholars focus on the interpretation of rituals as they exist or have existed in specific cultures and societies in the present or in the past. Globally speaking, two major trends can be discerned in the perspectives used to approach rituals (the second and third tendency distinguished by Bell). On the one hand, a large group of scholars regards a ritual as a system of symbols, as a sort of language, whose meaning should be deciphered. On the other hand, there is a group of scholars who follow a basically functionalist approach. They are interested in the functions that rituals fulfil in society, especially their social functions; how they serve, for instance, to strengthen social cohesion (the founding father of sociology, Emile Durkheim, must be mentioned here), or to demarcate the internal and external boundaries of communities and groups of people. (Compare the chapter by Leon Mock.) In the approaches that were followed in the more traditional research of early Christian rituals, varieties of the first and the second tendency described by Bell can be easily recognized, that is, the approaches focused on either the origins of rites or their symbolic meaning. Liturgical scholars were very much interested in the origins of Christian rituals

29 Fine examples of studies that highlight the importance of behaviour and of sensory experiences are A. McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists. Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford 1999) and S. Ashbrook Harvey, *Scenting Salvation. Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2006). McGowan's book is a study of early Christian Eucharists which does not focus on prayer texts, but on the food and the drink that were consumed (or not) and Ashbrook Harvey shows the importance of smell for early Christians, especially during their rituals.

30 Bell, *Ritual*, 1–89.

31 Bell, *Ritual*, 5–8.

in the period when the Christian religion emerged, and in the relationship with early Christian 'myths', that is biblical narratives. Moreover, they also spent a lot of energy on deciphering and interpreting the symbolic (theological) messages included in ritual texts, symbols, gestures. As a rule, however, the social dimension was practically neglected. Few scholars addressed questions about the role played by rituals in the construction of Christian communal identities. Neither did they ask how rituals might have contributed to the demarcation of boundaries between Christians and Jews, Christians and pagans, between different groups of Christians, between clergy and laypeople, between men and women, and so on. However, it is precisely these sorts of questions that are at the centre of much recent research on early Christianity. This research can gain much from an approach to early Christian liturgy that is particularly focused on its social dimensions.

d. By far the majority of the work that has been done by social scientists and scholars in cultural and ritual studies, as well as by historians, shows a strong tendency to challenge the aura of immutability and stability which often surrounds rituals and which is suggested by their performance and cultivated by their performers.[32] Instead, the dynamic character of rituals, which implies continuous change and interaction with the equally changing environment, is emphasized.[33]

This has important implications for the study of the history of rituals, for instance, the rituals of early Christianity.[34] In fact, it remains important to study their growth and development. However, the perspective from which the changes and diachronic processes are considered should be different from that which was for long predominant among liturgical scholars. These scholars tried to move back in time, that is, they attempted to reconstruct the origins or the earliest possible phases of liturgical traditions. This remains in itself a legitimate undertaking, but even when it proves successful, which is definitely not always the case, it will be no more than a first step. The next and more important step will be to discover what happened to that ritual when it was adopted by specific communities, and was continuously transformed, and adapted to new situations and new settings. To put it briefly, the focus should not primarily be on origins, but on innovation, on what is new. And as a matter of fact, the

32 Cf. Bell, *Ritual*, 145–153.

33 Cf. Bell, *Ritual*, 210–252.

34 I have developed the following observations more extensively and in more detail in my article 'The Making of Early Christianity. A Processing Perspective on the History of its Rituals', in S. Hellemans and G. Rouwhorst (eds), *The Making of Christianities in History. A Processing Approach* (Turnhout 2020), 83–118. Cf. also my article 'L'autorité et la reconstruction'.

dynamics of these transformations imply interaction with contexts. And contexts are always complex. They are the result of a continuing interplay between a variety of forces, social, cultural, religious, and the development of rituals is affected by all these forces. To obtain insight into the dynamics of ritual change, all of these factors have to be taken into account. This holds true also for early Christian rituals.

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CHAPTER 2

The Origins and Transformations of Early Christian Feasts

Gerard Rouwhorst

In this contribution, I will explore the implications that the new paradigm may have for research on the development of the various early Christian rituals. I will take a number of topics as examples that are related to the development of the most central early Christian feasts and the formation of a Christian liturgical year.

1 Christian Transformation of a Jewish Festival and Greco-Roman Myths: The Origins and Early Development of the Christian Passover Celebration

Aside from the celebration of the Eucharist, the early Christian Passover celebration is probably the early Christian ritual that has been most intensively investigated. It has been the subject of debates among church historians and liturgical scholars since at least the beginning of the eighteenth century. Interest in this topic increased remarkably in the twentieth century.[1] This was due for a considerable part to the liturgical reform of the Easter celebration that took place in the Roman Catholic Church and in various other churches and that was strongly inspired by the ideal of the *ressourcement*, a return to the traditions of the early church.

The history of the research of this celebration provides a typical example of the strong fascination with origins which long dominated the scholarly debates and discussions, at least till the last decades of the twentieth century. One of the most frequently discussed topics was the reconstruction of the earliest form of the celebration. The debate was provoked by the fact that early Christian sources, especially the *Church History* of Eusebius of Caesarea (5.23–25),

1 See for a list of both older and more recent publications H. Auf der Maur, *Die Osterfeier in der alten Kirche. Aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von R. Messner und W.G. Schöpf. Mit einem Beitrag von Clemens Leonhard*, Liturgica Oenipontana 2 (Münster 2003), 32–34 and *passim* about specific relevant topics and sources.

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attest the existence of two different practices.[2] In Rome and in many other places, Christians appeared to have been familiar from an early period on with Easter Sunday, which marked the end of a two-day fast that had started on Friday. Elsewhere, at least in Asia Minor, Christians celebrated Passover in the night of 14 to 15 Nisan, claiming that they had done so since the times of the apostle John. Which then was the original form of the celebration, the 'Quartodeciman' one in the night of 14 to 15 Nisan, or Easter Sunday? This debate was inextricably connected with the theological content of the Quartodeciman feast. Did the Quartodecimans commemorate the death of Christ,[3] did they celebrate both his death and resurrection,[4] or did the first generations of Christians wait for the *parousia*, the return of Christ during the Passover vigil, which some scholars believed was the major theme of the Quartodeciman celebration?[5]

In the second half of the twentieth century it became more and more clear that the Quartodeciman tradition had the best credentials for being the oldest and original form, and that Easter Sunday, or rather, the Easter triduum, was a derivative of the celebration of 14/15 Nisan, which at a certain moment was moved to the Friday, Saturday and Sunday after that celebration.[6] A remarkable outcome, because it turned out that the oldest form of the paschal celebration had not been preserved by the majority of Christians, who tried to impose—and eventually succeeded in doing so—*their* way of celebrating Easter on all the churches in the East and the West, but instead by a group of Christians who would soon become marginalized and were considered schismatic.[7] This insight was based for a considerable part on the discovery of the Passover homily ascribed to Melito of Sardes, which—according to a large majority of scholars—was delivered between 160 and 170 CE during a Quartodeciman celebration in the Asian city of Sardes.[8] The identification of this homily also put

2 Cf. for an overview of literature dealing with this question from 1700 to 1953, B. Lohse, *Das Passafest der Quartodecimaner* (Gütersloh 1953), 20–40. Cf. for the discussions in more recent literature: Auf der Maur, *Die Osterfeier*, 41–53.

3 Thus C. Schmidt, *Gespräche Jesu mit seinen Jüngern* (Leipzig 1919; reprint: Hildesheim 1967), 577–725. cf. Lohse, *Das Passafest*, 30–34.

4 Thus, for instance, O. Casel, 'Art und Sinn der ältesten christlichen Osterfeier', *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* 14 (1938), 1–78, esp. 13–14.

5 Thus Lohse, *Das Passafest*.

6 Cf. for instance P. Bradshaw and M.E. Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity*. Alcuin Club Collections 86 (London 2011), 39–68.

7 G. Rouwhorst, 'Liturgy on the Authority of the Apostles', in A. Hilhorst (ed.), *The Apostolic Age in Patristic Thought*. VCS 70 (Leiden/Boston 2004), 63–85.

8 See for the origins, liturgical background and content of this text Auf der Maur, *Die Osterfeier*, 58–72.

an end to the discussions about the content of the earliest Easter celebration. The question as to whether Christians commemorated the resurrection *or* the death of Christ should be considered obsolete, and the hypothesis according to which the Quartodecimans waited for the second coming of Christ, has equally lost its plausibility. Instead, it became clear from Melito's text, and from several other sources, that the earliest Christian paschal theology was based on a Christian and typological reading of the twelfth chapter of the book of Exodus, which describes the slaughtering and eating of the paschal lamb and the liberation from the slavery in Egypt and the tyranny of pharaoh.[9] These events were interpreted as prefigurations of the liberation of humanity from death and sin that was realized by the death of Christ, the true paschal lamb. The death of Christ, for its part, was understood as the victory of Christ over the forces of evil, Satan and death, who were beaten by Christ after he descended into the underworld, Hades, the realm of the dead, where humanity had been imprisoned since the fall of Adam and Eve.

These discoveries led to, or at least coincided with, an increasing interest in the Jewish roots of the early Christian Passover, especially the impact of the celebrations of the Passover Seder that are described in the Mishnah, the Palestinian and the Babylonian Talmud, and in versions of the Jewish Passover Haggadah attested by medieval sources. Scholars discovered numerous parallels between the early Christian and the Jewish celebrations, and considered them evidence for the dependence of the Christian feast on the Jewish one. In this way, scholars ascribed not only the reading of Exodus 12, but also the (supposed) expectation of the second coming of Christ, the reading of the first chapters of the book of Genesis, and even the so-called *Improperia* that blamed the Jewish people for its ingratitude, to Jewish roots or influences.[10]

This focus on the Jewish origins of the early Christian Passover gives rise to two difficulties. First, quite a lot of the attempts to trace back features of the Christian festival to the Jewish Pesach fail because there is no hard evidence

9 See G. Rouwhorst, 'The Quartodeciman Passover and the Jewish Pesach', *Questions liturgiques* 77 (1996), 152–173; and G. Rouwhorst, 'Christlicher Gottesdienst und der Gottesdienst Israels, Forschungsgeschichte, historische Interaktionen, Theologie', in M. Klöckener, A. Häussling and R. Messner (eds), *Theologie des Gottesdienstes. Gottesdienst der Kirche. Handbuch der Liturgiewissenschaft* Teil 2, Band 2 (Regensburg 2008), 539–545.

10 Cf. in this connection, in particular R. Le Déaut, *La nuit pascale. Essai sur la signification de la Pâque juive à partir du Targum d'Exode XII, 42*. Analecta Biblica 22 (Rome 1963); S. Hall, 'Melito in the Light of the Passover Haggadah', *Journal of Theological Studies*. N.S. 22 (1971), 29–46; D. Flusser, 'Some Notes on Easter and the Passover Haggadah', *Immanuel* 7 (1977), 52–60; A. Stewart-Sykes, *The Lamb's High Feast. Melito*, Peri Pascha, *and the Quartodeciman Paschal Liturgy at Sardis*, VCS 42 (Leiden/Boston/Cologne 1998).

to support them. In many cases, they are based on a problematic use of, often relatively late, Jewish sources.[11] But even when Jewish origins or influences are apparent, certain questions *must* be addressed in order to understand what happened to these Jewish elements once they had become part of early Christian rituals. What changes did they undergo after they had been appropriated by early Christian communities? And how were these transformations legitimated?

In connection with these issues, it should first be pointed out that the Christian interpretation of the key narrative of the Jewish feast, that is, the story about the slaughtering of the paschal lamb and the exodus from Egypt, significantly differed from the readings that were or became prevalent in Jewish tradition (even if there are remarkable parallels and commonalities with Philo of Alexandria's interpretation, for instance). The reinterpretation of this narrative, and more generally the way in which the Jewish feast was appropriated and transformed by the Christians, was closely connected with the process which is often designated as the 'parting of the ways', that is, the gradual separation between Jews and Christians.[12] Christian communities wanted to distinguish themselves from Jewish ones and this all too often involved fierce and aggressive anti-Jewish polemics which naturally provoked anti-Christian responses among Jews. The development of Christian Passover is a typical and unfortunate illustration of this process. Tellingly, it is precisely Melito's homily, which was profoundly indebted to Jewish ritual practices and narrative traditions, which is also notorious for its anti-Jewish character, its ferocious tirades against the Jews who are blamed collectively for having killed Christ.[13] No less astonishingly, very few of the modern historians and liturgical scholars who were much intrigued by the search for Jewish origins have paid attention to this dark side of the history of early Christian Passover.

Apart from the reinterpretation of the Passover and Exodus narrative, and the transformation of the Jewish celebration itself, the early Christian paschal feast also constituted a setting for the processing and transformation of non-Jewish, pre-Christian traditions. A clear example is provided by the central place that is assigned to the descent of Christ into the underworld, Hades or

11 See in particular C. Leonhard, *The Jewish Pesach and the Origins of the Christian Easter*. Studia Judaica 35. Berlin/New York 2006.

12 Cf. for this issue in particular A. Becker and A.Y. Reed (eds), *The Ways that Never Parted. Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 95 (Tübingen 2003).

13 Cf. E. Werner, 'Melito of Sardes, the first Poet of Deicide', *Hebrew Union College Annual* 37 (1966), 191–210; S.G. Wilson, *Related Strangers. Jews and Christians 70–170 c.e.* (Minneapolis 1995), 241–256.

Sheol. There are no clear antecedents for this narrative in the Bible. However, this theme is strongly reminiscent of the numerous stories known from Greco-Roman antiquity about the descent of heroes like Theseus, Heracles, Orpheus, and Odysseus into the realm of the dead.[14] There can be no doubt that these stories resonate in the descriptions of Christ's visit to the underworld and that they have influenced these descriptions. At the same time, we should once again be wary of one-sidedly focusing on the origins of this theme. Instead, we should attend to the transformations of these narrative traditions in early Christianity. To mention just one element, none of the heroes who visited the underworld was ultimately successful in the sense that he was able to conquer the ultimate power of death. Orpheus did not get his beloved Eurydice back! This is a remarkable contrast with the claim made in poetic images by early Christians that Christ had conquered the power of death once and for all.

The origins and early development of the Christian paschal feast provide a clear illustration of the way in which the first generations of Christians created their own ritual traditions. They did not build their traditions from scratch and it is impossible to reconstruct a kind of 'purely Christian ritual core' which would have been the basis for subsequent elaborations, adaptations, forms of acculturation etc. They started by using the ritual and narrative traditions with which they were familiar. Initially, these traditions were derived from Judaism, but soon elements of non-Jewish origin were also integrated, such as narratives about heroes who descended into the underworld. But no less importantly, the Christians transformed the appropriated traditions by rearranging and reinterpreting the ritual and its constituents in their own, often polemical, way. Thus, the early history of the paschal feast provides a clear and even painful example of the interreligious rivalry, in particular between Christians and Jews, to which these processes of appropriation can lead.

2 The Creation of a Collective Christian Memory: Ritual Time and Space in Jerusalem and Its Palestinian Surroundings

The second example I have selected is the so-called pilgrimage liturgy of Jerusalem and its surroundings, which came into existence in the second half of

14 See, for instance, C. Colpe and P. Habermehl, 'Jenseitsfahrt (Reise durch das Jenseits)', in *RAC* 17 (1996), 490–543, esp. 505–518. Cf. for the role of Christ's descent into the underworld in early Christian liturgy G. Rouwhorst, 'The Descent of Christ into the Underworld in Early Christian Liturgy', in M. Sarot and A. van Wieringen (eds), *The Apostles' Creed 'He Descended into Hell'*, Studies in Theology and Religion 24 (Leiden/Boston 2018), 54–78.

the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century and rapidly developed at the 'holy' sites where Jesus was believed to have been born, to have preached, died, and been buried, to have resurrected and ascended to heaven. There are several reasons for selecting this example. First, the ritual traditions are intriguing in themselves because of their specific character and their connection with the 'holy places'. Second, precisely because of their connection with the holy places, and thus with the 'Holy Land' as such, they exerted a strong influence upon the development of the ritual traditions, and especially of the liturgical year, in all Eastern and Western churches, from Spain to Armenia and Georgia. Thirdly, they are particularly illustrative of a number of developments that happened in the fourth century, when the contours and the identity of a specifically Christian liturgy had crystallized and a number of Christian core rituals and feasts—baptism, the Eucharist, a number of Christian feasts—had acquired a more or less distinct and identifiable shape. Last but not least, these ritual traditions provide an excellent opportunity for indicating the possibility, even necessity, of new approaches to various aspects, not least the multiple social dimensions of early Christian ritual practices.

Since the middle of the twentieth century especially, liturgical scholars have put a great deal of effort and have made much progress in reconstructing the ritual shape and chronological development of the liturgical services that were held at the holy places. This work was greatly facilitated by the unusually large quantity of informative and reliable sources that became available in the course of the twentieth century and that can moreover be dated with relative certainty. Mention should first of all be made of the remarkably detailed description of the holy places, the routes of the processions, and liturgical services at the holy sites in the *Itinerarium*, Egeria's travel diary which was discovered at the end of the nineteenth century.[15] The description given by this female pilgrim can be successfully complemented by data provided by a considerable number of Armenian and Georgian manuscripts of lectionaries and other liturgical sources, which contain the biblical readings, psalms and other pieces of liturgical hymnody.[16] On the one hand, these sources enable us to

15 Editions of the Latin text: P. Geyer, A. Franceschini and R. Weber, *Itineraria et alia geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout 1965)), 35–90; Latin text and French translation: P. Maraval, *Égérie. Journal de voyage*, SC 296 (Paris 2002[2]). English translation: J. Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels. Newly translated with supporting documents and notes* (Warminster 1981[3]); A. McGowan and P. Bradshaw, *The Pilgrimage of Egeria. A New Translation of the Itinerarium Egeriae with Introduction and Commentary*, Alcuin Club Collection 93 (Collegeville, MN 2018).

16 See in particular, A. Renoux, *Le codex arménien Jérusalem 121*. Patrologia Orientalis 163

fill many a gap in the information that Egeria gives and, on the other, they allow us to trace the development of the liturgical traditions from the end of the fourth century up to the eighth or ninth centuries. Remarkable pioneering work was carried out by the Benedictine monk Charles (Athanase) Renoux.[17] Thanks to his research and that of many other scholars, we now possess remarkably detailed knowledge of the liturgical celebrations held in Jerusalem and the surrounding area, as well as of their development until the period of the Crusades.[18]

Several scholars have tried to offer a historical explanation for the emergence of this type of liturgy in Jerusalem and the surrounding area and the remarkable impact it had on the further development of the liturgical traditions, especially the liturgical year, in Eastern and Western Christianity. For a long time, the work of the English liturgical scholar Gregory Dix was very influential.[19] According to Dix, this type of liturgy was the result of a liturgical revolution which occurred in the fourth century and which involved an important change in the Christian concept of time, which he referred to as 'historicism'. The primary characteristic of this transformation was that an earlier eschatological view, oriented to the future, was eclipsed by a strong focus on the past, that is, on the historical remembrance of singular events in the history of salvation. This manifested itself in a unique way in the liturgical services that were held at the holy places in Jerusalem and Palestine, for these were—as much as possible—suited to the exact time and place at which the events commemorated had once occurred.[20] For Dix, this was not simply a histori-

(35.1) and 168 (36.2) (Turnhout 1969 and 1971); M. Tarchnischvili, *Le Grand Lectionnaire de l'Église de Jérusalem* (*V^e^–VIII^s^ siècle*), CSCO 188, 189, 204, 205 (Louvain 1959/1960).

17 See for a bibliography: M. Findikyan, D. Galadza, A. Lossky (eds), *Sion, mère des Églises. Mélanges liturgiques offerts au Père Charles Athanase Renoux*, Semaines d'études liturgiques Saint-Serge, Supplement 1 (Münster 2016), 19–34.

18 See for a sketch of these developments, which may also be regarded as a summary of the results of Renoux's research: C. Renoux, 'Jérusalem à Saint-Serge: Histoire et hypothèses', in A. Lossky and G. Sekulovski (eds), *60 Semaines liturgiques à Saint-Serge. Bilans et perspectives nouvelles. 60^e^ Semaine d'études liturgiques Paris, Institut Saint-Serge, 24–27 juin 2013* (Münster 2016), 211–240. See for the further development of the liturgical traditions of Jerusalem from late antiquity to the medieval period D. Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem* (Oxford 2018). See for a detailed description and analysis of the 'stational liturgy' based on the available sources J. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship. The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy*. Orientalia Christiana Analecta 228 (Rome 1987), 43–104.

19 G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London 1945; many reprints), esp. 305–306 and 335–360 (in the edition of 1978).

20 It is striking with regard to the notion of such 'biblical' events that Egeria often uses the

cal explanation: he makes no secret of the fact that he deplores the rise of this fourth-century 'historicizing' piety as reflected in this type of liturgy. He considers it a loss of the original eschatological spirit of early Christianity and a regrettable splintering of a holistic experience of the mystery of salvation into the commemoration of separate phases and events in Jesus' life located at (supposedly) 'historical' sites.

Most scholars now regard this view, which was very influential for decades, as highly problematic. In a sense, it has simply been disproven, in so far as it is based on an exaggeration of the eschatological character of the earliest Christian liturgical traditions of the first centuries, which was generally assumed in publications dealing with the origins of early Christianity, but for which no hard evidence can be adduced.[21] As has been rightly remarked by Robert Taft and John Baldovin, eschatological and historical elements were intermingled from the very beginning of Christianity,[22] even if it cannot be denied that there was a growing propensity to model early Christian rituals on biblical, in particular New Testament, narratives. In addition, it must be noted that many other factors played an important role in the development of this type of liturgy.

First, it should be observed that the phenomenon of liturgical services that were held at designated churches or places in a city or town was not limited to Jerusalem. It is characteristic of a type of liturgy that also existed elsewhere, in particular in Rome and Constantinople, which is known as stational liturgy.[23] This phenomenon was connected with a changed relation to space, which itself was a result of the changed scale of Christian communities and their position within society. The growth of the communities necessitated the building of large church buildings and the publicly accepted status of Christianity made it possible for Christian communities to mark their presence in the cities by church architecture and rituals that were visible to everyone.[24]

There is, however, another facet of the pilgrimage liturgy of Jerusalem and its surroundings which is unique to it and which has hardly been taken into

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phrase '*apti diei et loco*', 'at the appropriate time and place', for instance in *Itinerarium Egeriae* 29.2; 29.5; 31.1; 32.1; 35.3–4; 36.1; 40.1; 42; 43.5–6. See *Égérie. Journal de voyage* (*Itinéraire*) *et Lettre sur la Bse Égérie* (ed. P. Maraval and M. Díaz Díaz), SC 296 (Paris 1997), 268, 270, 272, 276, 280, 294, 296–298.

21 G. Rouwhorst, 'How Eschatological Was Early Christian Liturgy?', *SP* 40 (2006), 93–108.

22 Baldovin, *The Urban Character*, 102–104; R. Taft, 'Historicism Revisited', *Studia Liturgica* 14 (1982), 97–109. This article was reprinted in R. Taft, *Beyond East and West. Problems in Liturgical Understanding* (Washington DC 1984), 15–30.

23 They are studied by Baldovin in his book.

24 Cf. Baldovin, *The Urban Character*, 102–104.

account by liturgical scholars, namely, its link with the formation and ongoing transformation of a Christian collective memory which constitutes an essential element in the formation and transformation of communal Christian identities. It is essential to realize this, because collective memories have a spatial dimension. The collective *imaginaires*, that is, the collective repertoires of narratives, conceptions, and motifs which form the heart of so-called collective memory,[25] are connected to and anchored in mnemotopes,[26] that is, in real or imagined places and spaces. They are associated with certain places where events that are significant to the communities are located; these often develop into pilgrimage centres. Such places, in turn, appeal to the imagination of people who never visited the holy places, but who nonetheless feel a strong sense of connection to them.

In this respect, mention can be made of a short but remarkable book that was published in 1941 by the sociologist and philosopher Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945), a former student of Henri Bergson and Emile Durkheim; a publication that was practically ignored by both sociologists and church historians until its relevance was recently rediscovered, thanks to, among others, the publications of Jan and Aleida Assmann about 'cultural memory'.[27] The subject of the book is what Halbwachs called the 'legendary topography of the Gospels in the Holy Land'.[28] Based on the archaeological data and the pilgrimage accounts of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages that were available to him, Halbwachs gives a detailed description of the development of the holy places in the region called Palestine at that time. What sets Halbwachs' description apart from other scientific and pious works about this topic is that he is not primarily interested in the historical or non-historical character of the traditions, but that he considers them as keys to insight into the formation of the collective memories of early Christian communities.

Halbwachs occupies himself primarily with the 'topography', the places themselves, and less with the rituals that were taking place and that were extensively described by Egeria. Nonetheless, there can be no doubt, as Halbwachs states in passing, that the rituals play a central role in the whole process, and

25 Cf. for this term J. Le Goff, *L'imaginaire médiéval* (Paris 1985). See also D. Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity. The Day of Atonement from Second Temple Judaism to the Fifth Century*. WUNT 163 (Tübingen 2003), 8–10.

26 See for this term J. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (München 1999^2), 59–60.

27 Cf., in particular, J. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*, 34–48, 59–60.

28 M. Halbwachs, *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en Terre sainte. Étude de mémoire collective* (Paris 1941). New edition with introductions by M. Jaisson and others: Paris 2008.

that the concept of 'collective memory' is particularly helpful in understanding these rituals.[29] The bodily behaviour, the processions, the songs the participants sang while walking, the emotional expressions (for instance, crying on Good Friday,[30] experiencing the darkness of the night during the vigils and kissing the wood of the relic of the cross on Good Friday)[31]—all these ritual movements and acts made the experience of being present at the holy places more intense. These rituals ensured that the commemoration of the events that were so central to the social memory of Christian communities became a more fully embodied experience. Furthermore, the fact that the rituals performed in Jerusalem and Palestine spread to the various churches of East and West, equally contributed, though in a different way, to the formation of an embodied collective memory and its *imaginaires* (see above) at places far removed from Jerusalem and Palestine.

This approach may also shed light on an aspect of the topography and pilgrimage liturgy of Jerusalem and Palestine which Halbwachs only mentioned in passing but which later generated quite a lot of attention as well as scholarly debate: the role played by rituals that are connected with figures and events described in the Old Testament, in particular the Temple of Jerusalem and its cult.

I will start by summing up the relevant data. Thus there is the Old Armenian lectionary which was published by Renoux and which contains a detailed description of the situation at the beginning of the fifth century. It includes four commemorations of four prophets on spots that are connected to their lives: Jeremiah in Anathoth just outside Jerusalem (1 May), Zechariah (10 June),[32] Elisha (14 June), and Isaiah (6 July). Even more surprisingly, the Old Armenian lectionary does not indicate a feast of the Nativity (!) for 25 December, but rather a commemoration in Jerusalem (at Sion) of James and David. There are strong indications that this was originally a commemoration of Jacob (in Armenian: Jakovbou) and David,[33] a celebration which according to the pilgrim of Piacenza (about 570 CE) was held at Mamre on 26 December (at this time the Nativity of Christ on 25 December had been introduced in Palestine as

29 'C'est du jour où un culte est organisé, du jour où ce lieu devient le point de ralliement de tout un groupe de croyants, qu'il se transforme en lieu saint, et que la force d'inertie qui est en lui se manifeste au dehors, dans le monde des consciences humaines.' (Halbwachs, *La topographie*, 126).

30 Egeria, *Itinerarium* 36.3 (SC 296, 282).

31 Egeria, *Itinerarium* 37 (SC 296, 284–286).

32 The manuscripts disagree about the precise date.

33 Cf. Renoux, *Le codex arménien*, 168 (36.2), 366–367, footnote 1 at ch. LXXI.

well).[34] Furthermore, the same source notes a celebration related to the ark of the covenant held on 2 July in Qiryat Yearim.[35] Finally, both Egeria and the Old Armenian lectionary attest the existence of the feast of Dedication, which commemorated the consecration of the churches that had been built on Golgotha, the so-called Martyrium and the Anastasis. This elaborate feast was celebrated on 13 September and was followed by a festive period of eight days (octave).[36] It is remarkable that in the sources just mentioned a link is established between this feast and the Dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem. Egeria refers to the dedication of the Temple by Solomon (2 Chr 7:8) and moreover designates the day by the term '*dies enceniarum*'.[37] The word *encenia* corresponds with the Greek word ἐγκαίνια (Vulgate: *encaenia*) which is used in John 10:22 as a designation for the feast of the Dedication of the Temple. Moreover, according to the Old Armenian Lectionary, John 10:22–42 is read as the Gospel pericope when the Eucharist is celebrated during the feast of Dedication.

In research of the historical roots of these feasts, scholars have been particularly concerned with finding Jewish antecedents and historical continuity with Jewish ritual practices. Thus, Joachim Jeremias has suggested that the veneration of Old Testament saints might have had its roots in Jewish popular piety.[38] Furthermore, several attempts have been made to trace the origins of the feast of Dedication on 13 September to Jewish festivals, in particular to Hanukkah[39] and Sukkot.[40] However, it has proven to be impossible to find a clear and convincing match with these Jewish feasts.[41] Hanukkah is not celebrated in September, but in the winter. As for Sukkot and Yom Kippur, they actually *do* fall in the same period of the year as Dedication, but the elements the Jewish

34 *Antonini Placentini Itinerarium*, 30 (ed. P. Geyer, *Itineraria et alia geographica*, CCSL 175, 144, see also 168).

35 Renoux, *Le codex arménien*, 348–351.

36 See Egeria, *Itinerarium* 48–49 (SC 296, 316–318); Renoux, *Le codex arménien*, 361–363.

37 Egeria, *Itinerarium*, 48 (SC 296, 316).

38 J. Jeremias, *Heiligengräber in Jesu Umwelt* (Göttingen 1958).

39 See, in particular, M. Black, 'The Feast of Encaenia Ecclesiae in the Ancient Church with special reference to Palestine and Syria', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 5 (1954), 78–85; G. Kretschmar, 'Die frühe Geschichte der Jerusalemer Liturgie', *Jahrbuch für Liturgie und Hymnodik* 2 (1956), 22–46, esp. 42–45.

40 Thus, among others, J. van Goudoever, *Fêtes et calendriers bibliques*, Théologie historique 7, Paris 1967, troisième edition revue et augmentée, 281–285; see for an overview of the various theories and the debates about the impact of Jewish feasts on the Christian feast of Dedication, Stökl Ben Ezra, *The Impact*, 290–303, in particular footnote 12.

41 See also L. van Tongeren, *Exaltation of the Cross. Toward the Origins of the Feast of the Cross and the Meaning of the Cross in Early Medieval Liturgy*, Liturgia condenda 11 (Leuven 2000), 30–32.

feasts have in common with the Christian one are not close enough to prove direct historical continuity. On the contrary, as far as the date of 13 September is concerned, Anton Baumstark, following a suggestion made by Ildefons Herwegen, has advanced another possible solution which had nothing to do with any Jewish festival: 13 September was the day when the dedication of the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill in Rome was commemorated.[42] Was this a mere coincidence or could it be the case that the emperor Constantine had deliberately chosen this date with the intention of replacing the Old Capitolium by Mount Golgotha, where the Martyrium Church had been built, and the Holy Sepuchre.

Rather than pursuing unsolvable questions concerning the origins and prehistory of these feasts and rituals, it seems more fruitful to try to understand how they functioned in the Christian communities of Jerusalem and Palestine in the fourth century, what role they played in the formation of a Christian collective memory, and how they served the religious and political aims of the communities, their religious and also political leaders who built the basilicas. After all, it is only of minor relevance to know whether there was historical continuity or not, in the sense of a causal connection between the feast of Dedication and a specific Jewish feast. The most important thing is that ritual and narrative elements connected with feasts like Hanukkah, Sukkot or, and this is another possibility, Yom Kippur,[43] were rearranged in a uniquely Christian manner, in such a way that they contributed to developing the collective identity of the Christian communities of Jerusalem and Palestine.

One of the most remarkable aspects of this process is that it involved a Christian appropriation of Jewish traditions, which in fact implied an act of (or an attempt at) expropriation. In fact, while commemorating Old Testament saints and appropriating traditions that were linked to the Temple of Jerusalem, Christians claimed that *they* and not the Jews possessed the ownership of these traditions. Symptomatic of this supersessionist attitude is the fact that the Christians considered the major Christian church complex in Jerusalem, the

42 A. Baumstark, *Liturgie comparée* (Chevetogne 1953), 203; K. Mohlberg and A. Baumstark, *Die älteste erreichbare Gestalt des Liber Sacramentorum anni circuli der römischen Kirche* (*Cod.pad. D 47, foll. 11r–100r*). Liturgiegeschichtliche Quellen und Forschungen11/12 (Münster 1927), 158*–159*. Cf. Plutarchus, *Life of Publicola* 14, ed. K. Ziegler, Teubner, 1960^3; English translation by B. Perrin in LCL 46 (Cambridge, MA. 1914). Baumstark also refers to an inscription published in C. Hülsen, Th. Mommsen, and W. Henzen (eds), *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* I. 1 (Berlin 1893), 329.

43 See for the parallels between this Christian feast and Yom Kippur: Stökl ben Ezra, *The Impact*, 296–302.

Church of the Anastasis, as the New Temple which had replaced the old one,[44] the ruins of which were about a mile away! Thus, the symbolic topography and its related rituals as well as the construction of the buildings not only contributed to the collective memories of communities, but also demarcated the boundaries between those who belonged and those who did *not* belong to the communities, who were excluded and whose buildings had been ruined (it was symbolically significant that the Temple lay in ruins).[45]

It may finally be remarked that the interreligious rivalry concerning religious buildings and rituals in Jerusalem would continue afterwards in the Byzantine as well as in the Islamic period. Let us not forget that in the eighth century, Chalife Abd-al Malik built the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque on the very spot of the Temple Mountain![46]

3 The Origins and Subsequent Transformations of a Christian Feast: The Feast of Epiphany on 6 January

Our third and last example is derived from the same phase in the development of early Christian liturgy as the preceding one. As I hope to demonstrate, there is even a direct link with the 'pilgrimage liturgy' of Jerusalem. We will also encounter the same processes as before: transformation of non-Christian traditions; ritual rivalry between communities; the formation of collective identities and memories. In this case, however, polemics against Jews and Judaism—either real or imagined—no longer play a predominant role. On the contrary, 'pagan' traditions do, though less than earlier scholarship wanted us to believe. Most importantly, it will be shown that different Christian communities started discussing and negotiating rituals and distinguishing themselves by the celebration of liturgical feasts, with the result that these feasts could even become a cause for intra-Christian polemics. This is what emerges from the history of

44 Cf. J. Wilkinson, 'Jewish Influences on the Early Christian Rite of Jerusalem', *Le Muséon* 92 (1979), 347–360.

45 This also seems to shed light on another feast mentioned by the Old Armenian lectionary: a movable feast of the dedications of the altars that was celebrated in December, on a date which was not fixed (Renoux, *Le codex arménien*, 366–367). Could it be that this feast was regarded as a Christian counter-celebration of Hanukkah, the feast of the Dedication of the Temple of Jerusalem, the date of which was similarly calculated according to a movable lunar calendar? This seems a very plausible thesis.

46 Cf. for interreligious architectural rivalry in Jerusalem from the fourth century to the Umayyad Era: M. Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple. The Discovery of Ancient Jerusalem* (New York 1982).

a feast that was and is celebrated by various Eastern and Western churches, on the same day but in different ways: the feast of Epiphany on 6 January.

The early history of the feast of Epiphany has for many years given rise to scholarly discussions which are similar to the debates concerning the festival that for a while functioned as its counterpart: Christmas, celebrated on 25 December. Christmas originated in the West, almost certainly in Rome, by the end of the third or in the first part of the fourth century, as the feast of the Nativity.[47] One of the most hotly debated issues concerns the content of the feast of 6 January. In fact, we are confronted by a remarkable variety of traditions here. In the Eastern and Western sources of the fourth and fifth centuries, this feast is associated with three major themes: the birth of Christ, his baptism in the Jordan, and the visit of the Magi. The churches of Jerusalem and Palestine, as well as the Syriac-speaking communities of Nisibis and Edessa, which at that time did not celebrate Christmas on 25 December, commemorated the birth of Jesus on 6 January.[48] For a while, the Greek-speaking part of Syria, Cappadocia, and Constantinople also appear to have celebrated the birth of Christ on 6 January, but after the introduction of the feast of 25 December by the end of the fourth century, they started celebrating the baptism of Christ on 6 January.[49] Finally, the churches of Rome and North Africa, where the feast of Christmas was celebrated at least since the first half of the fourth century, opted for a third solution. Except for the Donatists in North Africa who appear not to have celebrated the feast at all,[50] the theme of the festival of 6 January was the visit of the Magi.[51]

Remarkable combinations of the three festal themes can be found in various places. For fourth-century Egypt, John Cassian attests the custom of celebrating both the birth and the baptism of Jesus.[52] In Egypt this solution was soon abandoned but the Armenian Church, where the Western feast of 25 December never gained acceptance, has continued to celebrate both events on 6 January until today.[53] On the other hand, in Northern Italy and Gaul, the visit of the

47 See for the scholarly discussions about the origins of Christmas S. Roll, *Toward the Origin of Christmas*. Liturgia condenda 5 (Kampen 1995), 57–164.

48 H. Förster, *Die Anfänge von Weihnachten und Epiphanias*. Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 4 (Tübingen 2007), 128–179.

49 Förster, *Die Anfänge*, 180–209.

50 See Augustine, *Sermo* 202, 2 (PL 38, 1033). Cf. T. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (New York 1986), 144.

51 Cf. Förster, *Die Anfänge*, 243–285; Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts*, 154–157.

52 John Cassian, *Collationes* 14.9 (CSEL 13, 408, 12). Cf. for this passage Förster, *Die Anfänge*, 78–82. Förster has questioned the reliability of some other sources that have been adduced as evidence for this practice.

53 Cf., for instance, Förster, *Die Anfänge*, 148–152.

Magi was often combined with the baptism of Christ which, mostly together with a fourth motif, the wedding at Cana, constitute the so-called *tria miracula*. [54]

The question then arises: what was the 'original' festal theme: the birth of Christ,[55] his baptism in the Jordan,[56] or were both events commemorated?[57] Another—even more complex—possibility exists, for perhaps initially two types of feast existed: one commemorating the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan and another his birth in Bethlehem.[58]

The question of the original content of the feast is closely connected with that of its origin. Two competing explanations can be observed with regard to this issue. On the basis of a number of early Christian writings, in particular Epiphanius' *Panarion* 51.22.3–11, several scholars have claimed that a relationship existed with pre-Christian winter solstice festivals and other feasts that were celebrated at various places in December or January. They concluded from this that the feast of the Epiphany, like Christmas for that matter, had its origins in and was a Christianization of pre-Christian, 'pagan' traditions.[59] This explanation is commonly known as the 'History of Religions hypothesis'. Adherents of another explanation, which is often called the 'computation hypothesis', can be found primarily among scholars who assume that the birth of Christ was the original theme of the festival. They relate the origins of the feast to an early Christian exegetical tradition which situated the conception of John the Baptist in October, on Yom Kippur, assuming that Zechariah, the father of John, who was a high priest and entered the Holy of Holies (cf. Luke 1:8–10), which was allowed only on that day. Starting from that assumption, it has been argued that the conception of Jesus occurred six months later (Luke 1:26), so that John

54 Förster, *Die Anfänge*, 221–243 and 288–296; Cf. Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts*, 152–154; Talley, *The Origins*, 141–144.

55 Thus, among others, B. Botte, *Les origines de Noël et de l'Epiphanie. Étude historique* (Louvain 1932); Förster, *Die Anfänge*, esp. 124–126; G. Rouwhorst, 'The Feast of Epiphany in Early Syriac and Armenian Tradition' (forthcoming).

56 Thus R. Coquin, 'Les origines de l'Épiphanie en Égypte', in B. Botte and E. Melia et al., *Noël, Épiphanie, retour du Christ*. Lex orandi 40 (Paris 1967), 139–170.

57 Thus G. Winkler as well as P. Bradshaw and M.E. Johnson argue that Jesus' baptism would have been the original theme but that his baptism was understood as a birth, and that baptism and birth were therefore seen as one event. See G. Winkler, 'Die Licht-Erscheinung bei der Taufe Jesu und der Ursprung des Epiphaniefestes', *Oriens Christianus* 78 (1994), 177–229, esp. 215–222; Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins*, 141.

58 Thus T. Talley who suggested that in Egypt baptism would have been the original theme and in Jerusalem the birth of Christ in Bethlehem (Talley, *The Origins*, 129–134).

59 Cf. for the sources used and the different theories Talley, *The Origins*, 112–117; Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins*, 131–134.

the Baptist was born in the summer (summer solstice) and Jesus some days after midwinter, either on 25 December or on 6 January. A peculiar variant of this computation theory has been developed by Thomas Talley, who, starting from the assumption that Jesus' baptism had been the central festal theme in Egypt and his birth in Jerusalem, speculated that the variant of the feast had originated in an Egyptian course reading of the Gospel of Mark and the other in a Jerusalemite course reading of Matthew, which would have started in January and culminated in the reading of the passion narrative during Holy Week.[60]

Both the 'History of Religions hypothesis' and the 'computation hypothesis' (including the variant proposed by Talley), meet with serious difficulties, which also explains why no consensus has been reached on this question. One of the major problems with the 'History of Religions' hypothesis is that all attempts to find a satisfactory match with a specific pre-Christian festival which would also have been celebrated on the exact date of 6 January, have failed. Even in rare instances in which a feast was celebrated on exactly the same date,[61] the parallels with Christian sources relative to Epiphany are not very precise. Moreover, some of the examples adduced by Epiphanius are derived from rather remote corners of the Mediterranean world such as Petra.[62] As for the computation hypothesis, there is indeed early evidence for the existence of the chronology we have mentioned, and, what is more, it directly relates to the feast of 6 January. The earliest reference is found in the writings of Ephrem the Syrian who actually celebrated the birth of Christ on 6 January.[63] This might be used as an argument in favour of the computation hypothesis. However, as it turns out, things are more complicated. This whole chronology makes a rather artificial impression. It is actually built on the surprising assumption that Zechariah was the high priest, which would have been the reason why he entered the Temple on Yom Kippur! There is no doubt that, at a very early stage, a link was established between the chronology and the celebration of the birth of Christ on 6 January. But what does this mean? Was the birth of Christ celebrated on 6 January (or 25 December) because the event was already connected to that date before the introduction of the feast? Or was the chronology invented to bolster the celebration on that date, which then must have been chosen for another

60 Talley, *The origins*, 129–134.

61 This is the case with the vigils held according to Epiphanius (*Panarion* 51.22.3–11) in Alexandria and other places in the night from 5 to 6 January.

62 *Panarion* 51.22.11.

63 See his *Commentary on the Diatessaron* 1.29; French translation of the Armenian text: L. Leloir, *Ephrem de Nisibe. Commentaire de l'évangile concordant ou Diatessaron*, SC 121 (Paris 1965), 61–62. Cf. *Hymn on Nativity* 4, 32 and 34 (Ed. E. Beck, CSCO 186, 28 and 187, 26).

reason? Is it plausible that the introduction of feasts occurred on the basis of calculations by exegetes and theologians? For a feast to take root in a community more is needed than a sophisticated computation. There must have been more at stake. Finally, the solution suggested by Thomas Talley has been widely rejected as too speculative: there is hardly any evidence to support it.[64]

To solve these questions, it is best to start by taking a fresh look at the content of the feast based on the most recent and critical examination of the complete source material. As I will show in a forthcoming article,[65] and as has also been suggested particularly by Hans Förster,[66] there is strong evidence that in the East, the feast of 6 January originated as the commemoration of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, where a big basilica was built soon after the conversion of Constantine on the spot where the grotto of the birth of Christ was located. At the same time, all the arguments that have been adduced to prove the early existence of a celebration which had the baptism in the Jordan as its major theme have been refuted, in particular by Hans Förster.[67] If this is correct, the subsequent development and the spread of the feast can be reconstructed as follows. The feast of 6 January which had originated in Bethlehem, soon had to compete with another new festival dedicated to the birth of Christ coming from the West, that is, Christmas on 25 December. Different solutions were adopted to solve this problem. In some churches the introduction of the feast of 25 December continued to meet with resistance and for a long time these faith communities held on to the custom of celebrating the birth of Christ, and nothing else, on 6 January. That was especially the case in Jerusalem and Palestine, which is not surprising given the fact that the feast had its origins in Bethlehem. Another solution was to celebrate both festivals, but to provide each of them with its own festal theme. Except for the Armenian Church, most Eastern churches accepted Christmas and started celebrating Jesus' Baptism on 6 January instead. The Armenian practice which consisted of celebrating both events on 6 January also appears to have existed in Egypt during a short period of time. It may be best accounted for as an attempt to combine the celebration of Christ's baptism, which had also recently been introduced in various churches, with the ancient celebration of the birth of Christ on 6 January which was of Palestinian origin.

Originally, the custom of celebrating the birth of Christ on 6 January must also have spread from Jerusalem to some Western regions quite soon after it had

64 Cf. Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins*, 102–104, 141.
65 Rouwhorst, 'The Feast of Epiphany' (n. 55).
66 Förster, *Die Anfänge*, esp. 124–126.
67 Förster, *Die Anfänge*, esp. 57–120.

been introduced in Jerusalem and Palestine, but in these Western regions, too, it had to compete with Christmas which had struck root before. Various solutions were adopted to distinguish it from the feast of 25 December. In Rome and in North Africa, where Christmas had the oldest testimonials, the feast of 6 January received a different content, namely, the visit of the Magi.

The origin and the early development of the feast have thus been clarified, but this does not mean that all problems have been solved and all questions have been answered. One of the questions that remain is why the date of 6 January was chosen for the commemoration of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem. Based on the available evidence, it is impossible to answer this question with absolute certainty, but I would like to point to several factors that may have played a role. First, there is early evidence of Christian attempts to calculate the date on which Christ had died, was born, and had been baptized. Secondly, the beginning of January was an important festal season in the pre-Christian Mediterranean world. Especially the Saturnalia and the feast of Calends were widely celebrated and popular. Several church fathers in their sermons for Christmas, New Year and Epiphany engaged in polemics against these festivities,[68] and considered the Christian feasts, especially that of 6 January as an alternative to these festivities. Finally, the date of 6 January fell shortly after the winter solstice and could be easily experienced as a symbol of the victory of light over darkness. Several sources and the very theme of 'epiphany' itself give evidence to a great sensitivity to light and solar symbolism, which easily lent itself to a Christian interpretation.[69] It seems impossible to determine which

68 See Asterius of Amasea, *Hom.* IV (ed. C. Datema, *Asterius of Amasea. Homilies I–XIV* (Leiden 1970), 38–43); Gregory of Nazianzus, *Hom.* 38, 5–6 (PG 36, 316; ed. C. Moreschini and P. Gallay, SC 358 (Paris 1990), 111–115); cf. *Hom.* 39, 3–7 (PG 36, 336–341; SC 358, 152–163); John Chrysostom. *Hom. in Kalendas* (PG 48, 953–962); Augustine, 2. 198augm = 26 Dolbeau (ed. F. Dolbeau, *Augustin d'Hippone. Vingt-six sermons au people d'Afrique* (Paris 1976)); R. Drobner, *Augustinus von Hippo. Predigten zu Neujahr und Epiphanie* (Frankfurt a. Main 2010); (Ps.?) Maximus of Turin, *Sermo* XVI, *De calendis Januariis* (PL 57, 253–258); Petrus Chrysologus, *Hom.* 155, *De kalendis Januariis* (PL 52,609–611; ed. A. Olivar, CCSL 24B (Turnhout 1982), 960–965); Caesarius of Arles, *Sermones* 92 and 93 (ed. G. Morin, CCSL 104 (Turnhout 1953), 779–786); Isidorus of Sevilla, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, I,41 (ed. C. Lawson, CCSL 113 (Turnhout 1989), 46–47); *Concilium quinisextum*, can. 62. (ed. H. Ohme, FC 82 (Turnhout 2006), 254). See for more details and backgrounds: M. Meslin, *La fête des kalendes de janvier dans l'empire romain. Essai d'un rituel du Nouvel An* (Bruxelles 1970); F. Graf, *Roman Festivals in the Greek East. From the Early Empire to the Middle Byzantine Period* (Cambridge 2015), 129–162.

69 See several passages from Ephrem the Syrian's hymns *De Nativitate* which probably contain the earliest evidence for the celebration of the birth of Christ on 6 January: *Nat.* 5, 13–15 (ed. and German translation: E. Beck, in CSCO 186/187, 48). See also Ephrem's *Com-*

of these factors played the most decisive role in the choice of 6 January as the date for the feast. However, all of them may have contributed to the origins and, no less importantly, to its quick and successful implementation and rapid spread. The origins of the commemoration of the birth of Christ on 6 January can best be explained as the result of an interplay between a Christian belief in the incarnation, exegetical speculations, the need for Christian mnemotopes ('*lieux de mémoire*'[70]), a sensitivity to the rhythm of the seasons and the solar cycle, as well as the fact that in antiquity the beginning of January was a festal season, which caused Christian communities and Christian leaders to find Christian alternatives to non-Christian practices.

It should be added that not only the introduction but also the further development of the feast in various Eastern and Western churches was the result of a complex interplay of transformations in early Christian communities. I just want to mention some of the major factors that contributed to the dynamics of such ongoing transformations.

First of all, the spread of the feast was, at times, the cause of intra-Christian rivalries between Eastern and Western churches who were developing their own identities. In several cases an intention is evident to distinguish oneself from others or at least to guard one's own traditions. A clear example is the aforementioned resistance which existed in Jerusalem, Egypt, and Armenia against the introduction of the Western feast of Christmas.

In the second place, it is noteworthy that after the commemoration of the baptism of Jesus on 6 January had been introduced, a remarkable ritual became part of its celebration, which enjoyed, and still enjoys, enormous popularity in all the Eastern churches, with the exception of the Chaldaeans and the 'Church of the East': the blessing of water.[71] The water is not blessed for baptism, but to be taken home by the people who preserve it throughout the year, as John

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mentary on the Diatessaron I, 29 (French translation by L. Leloir in SC 121, 61–62) and Hymn *Nat.* 27, 1.21–22 (Beck, CSCO 186, 137 and 140 = CSCO 187, 125 and 127) the authenticity of which is doubtful but which definitely demonstrates the sensitivity to solar symbolism in Syriac tradition. See for further details M. Wallraff, *Christus Verus Sol. Sonnenverehrung und Christentum in der Spätantike*, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsband 32 (Münster 2001), 191–195. The same sensitivity also emerges from the fact that the Cappadocian fathers who celebrated Christ's baptism on 6 January designated the feast by the word τὰ φῶτα, the 'lights' (cf. J. Mossay, *Les fêtes de Noël et d'Épiphanie d'après les sources littéraires cappadociennes du IVe siècle* (Louvain 1965), 24–27) which refers to baptism, but at the same time also contains an allusion to the season in which the light of the sun began to conquer the darkness.

70 Cf. P. Nora (ed.), *Lieux de mémoire*, 7 vols (Paris 1984–1992).

71 Cf. for the history of this ritual N. Denysenko, *The Blessing of Waters and Epiphany. The Eastern Liturgical Tradition* (Farnham 2012).

Chrysostom already did.[72] John Chrysostom does not explain in detail for what purposes it was used precisely, but it was clearly believed to offer protection against all sorts of evil and to be beneficial to body and soul. How can the emergence and spread of this ritual, which has no direct link with Christian baptism, be explained? Admittedly we do not know for certain when and where it was introduced for the first time. Nonetheless, it is a well-known fact, which is frequently mentioned in publications dealing with the history of the feast, that water rituals were celebrated at the beginning of January at various places in the Mediterranean world. For instance, Epiphanius refers to the Egyptian custom of drawing water from the Nile, and to other related practices.[73] Even if it were futile to claim that any of these rituals lie at the basis of the ceremonial drawing of water on Epiphany and can thus explain its origin, their very existence shows that the ritual of 6 January fitted in with existing practices that lent themselves to the development of Christian forms. Again, in spite of the justified critique of the History of Religions hypothesis, there is no reason to radically discard it as completely flawed, as long as we keep in mind that rituals are always subject to ongoing transformations.

Finally, it may be asked what rationale lay behind the Roman and North African practice of commemorating the visit of the Magi. Strangely enough, the question is rarely discussed in publications dealing with the history of the Epiphany. And when it happens, the commemoration is usually considered as simply a sort of prolongation or conclusion of the commemoration of the birth of Christ on 25 December. Or it is viewed as a 'narrowing down' of the theme of Epiphany to the 'manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles',[74] which interpretation was assumed to imply a rejection of the Jews. Undoubtedly, the Magi were regarded as representatives of the non-Jews, the Gentiles. This is confirmed by a series of homilies by Augustine and by pope Leo, as well as by the liturgical texts of the earliest Roman sacramentaries;[75] these texts have an anti-Jewish tendency.[76] But is there serious reason to qualify the emphasis on the conversion of the Gentiles and the universalist tendency implied in terms of a 'narrowing down'? It seems more appropriate to speak here of a shift of focus. Instead of the theme of Jesus' baptism, another core motif is placed in the foreground.

72 John Chrysostom, *De baptismo Christi* (PG 49, 365–366). Cf. Denysenko, *The Blessing*, 17–18.

73 *Panarion* 51.30.1–3. Cf. Talley, *The Origins*, 112–117 (n. 54).

74 Thus Talley, *The Origins*, 146.

75 See *Sacramentarium Gelasianum Vetus*, 57–68 (ed. L. Mohlberg, *Liber sacramentorum romanae ecclesiae ordinis anni circuli* (Rome 1981[3]), 14–16); *Sacramentarium Gregorianum Hadrianum* 87–98 (ed. J. Deshusses, *Le sacramentaire grégorien. Ses principales formes d'après les plus anciens manuscrits*, Spicilegium Friburgense 16 (Fribourg 1979), 113–116).

76 Talley, *The Origins*, 146.

And, no less importantly, this occurred in a specific historical setting and during a crucial phase in the history of Western Christianity, namely, in the fourth and fifth centuries, when the Roman Empire was gradually being Christianized and the new religion continued to meet with resistance, not least in Rome. Seen against this background, the choice of the visit of the Magi as the central theme of the feast of 6 January appears in a surprising light, since it represents and advertises the conversion of so-called 'pagans'.

4 Conclusion

The three examples of the development of early Christian feasts that I have examined in some detail present a variegated picture. They were derived from different phases in the history of early Christian liturgy, one from the period in which everything was still in the making and two from the fourth century, when the basis had already been laid for the formation of the classical rituals that most Eastern and Western traditions had in common. There were also remarkable differences with regard to the backgrounds of the various Christian communities in which the feasts were celebrated. In some cases, there would have been frequent contacts between Christian and Jewish communities. Elsewhere, especially in Jerusalem, Christians would have come into contact with Judaism through the very site and presence of (ruins of) buildings which reminded them of the period of the Second Temple. Some Christians would have felt the need to distinguish themselves from Greek and Roman religious practices more than others.

Nonetheless, at least two features can be identified that the three examples have in common and which deserve greater attention in the study of early Christian rituals than they have received so far:

1. Pre-Christian ritual traditions played an important role in the formation of Christian feasts. This is most evident in the rituals that came into existence in the early, formative period of early Christianity when even the most important Christian core rituals, such as the paschal feast, were still in the making. Once common structures and patterns crystallized, pre-Christian traditions played a more reduced role. Nonetheless, as the case of Epiphany shows, even then there was interaction with such traditions.
2. Early Christian rituals, in particular feasts, played an important role in demarcating the boundaries between Christians and Jews, Christians and pagans, Christians and other Christians. They strengthened the unity and identity of the Christian communities, but at the same time were often also a cause for rivalry and even outright hostility between communities.

In this respect, they show an ambivalence which is common to all rituals, both Christian and non-Christian, religious and secular.

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CHAPTER 3

Is the Instruction to Greet One Another with a Holy Kiss a Pauline Transformation?

Rianne Voogd

Centuries before Paul, Xenophon already wrote: 'Heracles! What alarming power in a kiss!'[1] A kiss always seems to be a special gesture that encompasses a 'continuum of meaning.'[2] The apostle Paul instructs people to greet one another with a holy kiss. This instruction gives rise to several questions: what did Paul mean when he instructed his readers to greet one another with a holy kiss? Was it a familiar act in everyday life? Was greeting one another with a kiss in a letter a known convention in Paul's days? And, did Paul transform an everyday gesture into a Christian act?

1 The Basics

In four of his letters, Paul instructs his readers to greet all the brothers (and sisters) or to greet one another with a holy kiss:

1 Thess 5:26	Ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς πάντας ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ
1 Cor 16:20	Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ
2 Cor 13:12	Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν ἁγίῳ φιλήματι
Rom 16:16	Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ

There are only minor differences between these passages. While 1 Thess 5:26 reads: Greet *all the brothers* (*and sisters*) with a holy kiss, the other three passages have *one another* instead. Furthermore, in 2 Cor the sequence of the words φίλημα and ἅγιος is reversed in comparison with the other texts. All in all, the similarities outweigh the differences between the passages. The four Pauline texts contain the verb ἀσπάζομαι in the imperative mode, the noun φίλημα and the adjective ἅγιος, and are part of Paul's letter endings. The New

1 *Memorabilia* 1, 3, 12. E.C. Marchant (trans.), *Xenophon, Memorabilia* (LCL 168), (London/Cambridge, MA 1968), 51. Xenophon lived c. 430–c. 354 BCE.

2 A. Blue, *On Kissing. From the Metaphysical to the Erotic* (London 1996), 15.

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Testament contains only one other passage that resembles these Pauline passages, namely 1 Pet 5:14: 'Greet one another with a kiss of love.'[3]

Paul enjoins his readers to kiss one another, as did the author of 1 Peter: does that mean that the instruction to greet one another with a kiss was a common practice in letters in the first century CE? The Pauline passages are sometimes compared with passages from Cicero's letters.[4] For example, in the correspondence between Cicero and his friend Atticus, Cicero asks his friend to give his daughter a kiss on his behalf:

> Please give Attica a kiss from me for being such a merry little thing. It is what one likes to see in children [Atticae, quoniam, quod optimum in pueris est, hilarula est, meis verbis suavium des volo].[5]

Similar examples can be found in the letters that the later author Fronto (c. 90/95–167 CE) exchanged with his addressees.[6] These examples raise the

3 Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης. In the New Testament, beside the Pauline passages and 1 Pet 5:14, only a few other verses mention kisses. The most famous examples are of course the passages in which Judas greeted Jesus with a kiss: Matt 26:48–49, Mark 14:44–45 (cf. Luke 22:47–48).

4 The passage from Cicero and the other examples in this article have been chosen because they shed light on the main question of the paper. More examples, both Greek and Latin, in which authors refer to kissing or kisses can be found in my dissertation R. Voogd, *De betekenis van Paulus' oproep tot de groet met de heilige kus* (Vught 2016). Examples in Greek are Josephus, *The Jewish War* 7.391 see H. St. J. Thackeray (trans.), *Josephus, The Jewish War*, (London/Cambridge, MA 1961), 615; Philo, *Who is the Heir of Divine Things* § 40, see F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker (trans.), *Philo* (LCL 261), (London/Cambridge, MA 1996), 302–303, Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.24.44–50, see W.A. Oldfather (trans.), *Epictetus. The Discourses as Reported by Arrian, The Manual and Fragments* (LCL 218), (London/Cambridge, MA 1966), 198–201. And in Latin, in Suetonius, *Tiberius* 34.2, see J.C. Rolfe (trans.), *Suetonius* (LCL 31), (London/Cambridge, MA 1970), 342–343; and Pliny, *Naturalis historia* 26.2–3, see W.H.S. Jones (trans.), *Pliny. Natural History* (LCL 393), (London/Cambridge, MA 1966), 265–267.

5 Letter 420 (XVI.11). D.R. Shackleton Bailey (trans.), *Cicero. Letters to Atticus* (LCL 491), (London/Cambridge, MA 1999), 356–357. In another letter to Atticus Cicero also says that he would like to kiss Attica (XVI.3). See also K. Thraede, 'Ursprünge und Formen des "Heiligen Kusses" im frühen Christentum', in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 11–12 (1968/1969, reprinted: Münster Westfalen 1970), 133, n. 19, L. Edward Phillips, *The Ritual Kiss in Early Christian Worship*, (Cambridge 1996), 8 and M.P. Penn, *Kissing Christians. Ritual and Community in the Late Ancient Church* (Philadelphia 2005), 19, n. 71.

6 For instance *Ad M. Caes.* v. 33 (48), 'I gave my daughter the kiss you sent her: never has she seemed to me so kissing-ripe, never so kissed. Greet my Lady, my most sweet Lord. Farewell, and give your little matron a kiss from me', C.R. Haines (trans.), *Marcus Cornelius Fronto I* (LCL 112), (London/Cambridge, MA 1982), 233. See also K. Thraede, 'Kuss', *RAC* 22 (2008), 545–576 (558) and Penn, *Kissing Christians*, 137, n. 71.

question as to whether or not they are comparable to the Pauline passages. It should be noted of course that the letters of the three authors are dated to different periods. However, the passages in Cicero and Fronto are relevant to the Pauline passages because they refer to kisses at the end of a letter. The following differences between Paul's instruction and the passages by Cicero and Fronto come to the fore: to begin with, the context of the passages in the latter is that of correspondence between two people, and not between one man and several addressees. Furthermore, the setting is friendly and intimate, not religious.[7] Thus they provide no indication for a parallel with Paul's instruction, nor for an existing convention to instruct people to greet one another with a kiss. The passages in Cicero and Fronto do, however, show that kisses played a role in communication between people in everyday life and in the exchange of letters.

Another author who mentions kisses in his epistles is Seneca, who, for instance, refers to kisses in a letter to Lucilius. Lucilius complains about the way Seneca formulates his letters and accuses him of writing his epistles carelessly. In reaction to this complaint, Seneca uses a comparison between kisses that a man exchanges with his mistress and the kisses he gives to his children: these kisses are not similar, but both are sincere.

> I should like to convince you entirely of this one fact,—that I feel whatever I say, that I not only feel it, but am wedded to it. It is one sort of kiss which a man gives his mistress, and another which he gives his children; yet in the father's embrace also, holy and restrained as it is, plenty of affection is disclosed
>
> [Hoc unum plane tibi adprobare vellem: omnia me illa sentire, quae dicerem, nec tantum sentire, sed amare. Aliter homines amicam, aliter liberos osculantur; tamen in hoc quoque amplexu tam sancto et moderato satis apparet adfectus].[8]

These kisses that Seneca mentions cannot be interpreted as a parallel to the kisses that Paul refers to either, as the philosopher uses the kisses in *a compari-*

7 See also Penn, *Kissing Christians*, 19: '… there are very few non-Christian examples of the kiss as an epistolary closing, all in letters that appear much more intimate than Paul's'.

8 Letter 75. R.M. Gummere (trans.), *Seneca, Epistulae Morales II* (LCL 76), (London/Cambridge, MA 1970), 136–137. With regard to the dating of the letters Gummere remarks (ix): 'In spite of the many problems which confront us, it may be safely said that the years 63–65 constitute the period of the *Letters*.'

son, to make a point, while the apostle *instructs* his readers to greet one another with a kiss. Furthermore, Seneca is writing to an individual, that is Lucilius, while Paul is writing to a community of people. Lastly, the former is writing on a friendly basis to Lucilius, while the latter is writing in a religious setting to fellow believers.

So far only kisses in letters have been discussed, but kisses also appear in other types of literature. For instance, in his Epigrams Martial (c. 40–104 CE) regularly mentions kisses. These Epigrams grant us a view of everyday life in Roman society. Martial shows that kisses played an important role in relationships between people and that they were frequently exchanged.

> Flaccus, one just can't escape kissers [*basiatores*].
> They press, they stay, they pursue, they encounter,
> from this side and from that, anywhere, everywhere.[9]

In short, this passage illustrates that kisses played a significant part in the daily life of people in Roman society in the first century CE.[10]

Having compared pagan examples with the Pauline passages I will now consider Jewish sources. In the Hebrew Bible several examples can be found that refer to kisses, to biblical figures that kiss one another. This often concerns family members exchanging kisses when they depart or are reunited.[11] However, kisses similar to the kisses mentioned by Paul cannot be found. The Jewish-Hellenistic work *Joseph and Aseneth* (First Century BCE–Second Century CE) also contains various examples of kisses that are mostly exchanged between family members. One passage, refering to three kisses, stands out:

> And Joseph stretched out his hands and called Aseneth by a wink of his eyes. And Aseneth also stretched out her hands and ran up to Joseph and fell on his breast. And Joseph put his arms around her, and Aseneth (put hers) around Joseph, and they kissed[12] each other [ἠσπάσαντο ἀλλήλους] for a long time and both came to life in their spirit. And Joseph kissed

9 Book 11, Epigram 98, D.R. Shackleton Bailey (trans.), *Martial. Epigrams* (LCL 480), (London/ Cambridge, MA 1993), 79. The first three sentences of this epigram are quoted.

10 Passages in the *Discourses* of Epictetus also seem to illustrate this, for example *Discourses* 3.24.49–50, Oldfather, *Epictetus*, 201.

11 For example, Gen 33:4; 45:15, Exod 4:27; 18:7, Ruth 1:9; 1:14; 1 Kgs 19:20. See also M.I. Gruber, *Aspects of nonverbal communication in the ancient near east* 1 (Rome 1980), 330–332.

12 The Greek has a form of ἀσπάζομαι, not καταφιλέω, so the translation 'embraced' would be more suitable here.

> [κατεφίλησεν[13]] Aseneth and gave her spirit of life, and he kissed [κατεφίλησεν] her the second time and gave her spirit of wisdom, and he kissed [κατεφίλησεν] her the third time and gave her spirit of truth. And they embraced each other for a long time and interlocked their hands like bonds.[14]

In this passage kisses are connected to an exchange of spirit: spirit of life, wisdom, and truth. And it is obvious that this exchange of kisses takes place at a very special moment in the story of Joseph and Aseneth. Thus, it is possible to find Jewish sources that refer to kisses, but no examples can be presented that are similar to the Pauline passages.

Even though parallels between the Pauline passages and contemporaneous passages cannot be found, Paul's instruction is nevertheless compatible with the customs of his time, as can be deduced from research by several scholars, for instance T.Y. Mullins.[15] Focusing on greetings as a specific type of textual form in the New Testament he has distinguished four elements: a greeting verb, an indication of the person who does the greeting, an indication of the person greeted, and elaborating phrases. Furthermore, he has discerned different types of greeting: a first-person type, a second-person type, and a third-person type of greeting. In his epistles Paul does not use the first type of greeting for himself. An example of such a greeting can, however, be found in Rom 16:22, 'I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord.'[16] The third type of greeting is used, for instance, in Rom 16:16b, 'All the churches of Christ greet you.' Most often he applies the second type of greeting, for example in Rom 16:13, 'Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; and greet his mother—a mother to me also' and also when he instructs his readers to greet one another with a holy kiss. J.A.D. Weima suggests that 'a second-person greeting … functions virtually as a surrogate for a first-person greeting.'[17] This implies that the author of a letter involves the read-

13 In C. Burchard, *Joseph und Aseneth. Kritisch herausgegeben von Christoph Burchard mit Unterstützung von Carsten Burfeind & Uta Barbara Fink* (Leiden/Boston 2003), 248, Burchard puts this Greek word between brackets. In general, Burchard gives the following explanation about words between brackets, 369: 'Der Text der Ausgabe enthält Wörter, Wendungen und Sätze, die rückübersetzt sind, weil griechisch nicht überliefert, ganz selten auch nur vermutet.'

14 *Joseph and Aseneth* 19:10–20:1, C. Burchard, 'Joseph and Aseneth', in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* 2 (London 1985), 233–234.

15 T.Y. Mullins, 'Greeting as a New Testament Form', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 87 (1968), 418–426.

16 NRSV.

17 J.A.D. Weima, 'Sincerely, Paul: The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings', in S.E. Porter

ers of his epistle in the communication of his greetings. Mullins also observes that the second type of greeting 'is more complicated than at first it seems':

> It is an indirect salutation. The writer of the letter indicates that the addressee is to greet someone for him. In this way, the writer of the letter becomes the principal and the addressee becomes his agent in establishing a communication with a third party who is not intended to be among the immediate readership of the letter.[18]

When the focus is on the phrase: 'Greet one another with a holy kiss', one wonders if Paul is instructing one particular group of addressees to kiss another group in the community.[19] Although 'one another' implies reciprocity, this does not necessarily imply that Paul did indeed instruct one specific group to kiss another group. Paul's wish to also communicate his own kiss creates the following image: he asks the community members to simultaneously greet one another with a kiss and to pass on his own kiss to all the believers. In this way, the Greek τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς πάντας in 1Thess and the ἀλλήλους in the other three passages can be interpreted as having the same meaning.

Mullins reads ἐν φιλήματι ἁγίῳ as an elaborating phrase, which fits the picture as sketched by J.L. White that from the reign of Augustus onward, authors of epistles started to extend greetings to or from a third party in the letter closing:

> Letter writers began with some frequency, from the reign of Augustus onward, to extend greetings to or from a third party (or parties) in the letter closing. The large majority of these closing greetings used the verb ἀσπάζεσθαι, sometimes expressed in two or three forms: e.g., "Greet (ἄσπασαι) all those from the Caesareum, each by name"; "greet (ἄσπασαι) Didymos, the notary, along with his whole household …"; "Epitynchanon greets (ἀσπάζεται) you"; "greet (ἄσπασαι) all our friends, each by name."[20]

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and S.A. Adams (eds), *Paul and the Ancient Letter Form* (Leiden/Boston 2010), 307–345 (328).

18 Mullins, 'Greeting as a New Testament Form', 420.

19 Mullins has the following view on the greeting with a holy kiss: 'It is clearly a greeting from the writer to the third parties, with the readers of the letter as agents.' Mullins does not specify who these third parties are ('Greeting as a New Testament Form', 426).

20 J.L. White, *Light from Ancient Letters* (Philadelphia 1986), 202. White refers, for example, to PMichigan VIII 476, see l. 23 f. and l. 30 f. (these are the examples mentioned in the above quoted passage); and POxyrhynchos VII 1061, see l. 24 f. White made use of the following editions of the papyri: H.C. Youtie and J.G. Winter (ed.), *Papyri and Ostraca from Kara-*

The greeting with a kiss in Paul's instructions seems to fit this pattern: he extends his greeting and he uses the verb ἀσπάζεσθαι. The difference between Paul's four greetings and the greetings cited above is that Paul complements his salutation with a holy kiss.

To summarize: although in Paul's days kisses were a part of everyday life and also of correspondence, Paul used these kisses in his own way when he asked his addressees to greet one another with a holy kiss at the end of his letters. In the next section the focus is on the meaning of Paul's instruction to greet one another with a *holy* kiss.

2 The Meaning of the Holy Kiss

In the introduction I quoted the view that a kiss encompasses a continuum of meaning. So what could the meaning be of Paul's instruction to greet one another with a holy kiss? I wish to start with a general comment on the term 'meaning' as such, because the construction of meaning is not a matter of objectivity. We as contemporary readers can no longer approach the reality in and behind the New Testament texts. My point of departure in searching for the meaning that Paul and his addressees attached to the greeting is therefore the perspective formulated by F.W. Burnett: 'a historical narrative in both its form and content is not a re-construction of the "past itself" but is a con-struct that refers to the fictive discourse of other historians.'[21] The acknowledgement that only a construction of meaning is possible, does not, however, in any way detract from the value of such a construction.

Paul's instruction to greet one another with a holy kiss appears at the end of his letters. Therefore, I will focus first on the meaning of this Pauline phrase as part of the epistles. One of the purposes of letters in Paul's days (as it is nowadays) was communication between people who were physically separated. Although Paul is absent, he tries to be mentally present in his letters. The instruction to greet one another with a holy kiss is part of this purpose: Paul asks people to

nis, Second Series, vol. 8, nos. 464–521 (Ann Arbor 1951). A.S. Hunt (ed.), *The Oxyrhynchos Papyri*, vol. 7, nos. 1007–72 (London 1910).

21 F.W. Burnett, 'Historiography', in A.K.M. Adam (ed.), *Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation* (St. Louis 2000), 110. Earlier Burnett explains (108): 'Most historians readily acknowledge that the original contexts of past events are lost and that they must construct contexts by which to interpret them. This is different, however, from saying that history is a fictive context that is constructed by the historian and that the fictive context is the real referent and content of the historian's work.'

greet one another with a kiss, a kiss he would have exchanged with his brothers and sisters if he were present. Paul's own kiss is represented in the kisses his brothers and sisters give one another, just as he is personified by his letters although he is absent.

Furthermore, at the end of his letters Paul recapitulates ideas he earlier communicated in these epistles. This is what J.A.D. Weima concluded in his *Neglected Endings. The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings*.[22] This conclusion also applies to the instruction to greet one another with the holy kiss,[23] especially in the setting of 1 Thess. In this letter Paul elaborates on the theme of holiness, especially in the second part, for example in 1 Thess 4:3 'For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication.' The value Paul attaches to holiness is emphasized at the end of this letter: 'Greet all the brothers (and sisters) with a *holy* kiss.' The adjective, holy, refers to living a holy life, as explained earlier by Paul. Thus, the instruction to greet all the brothers (and sisters) with a holy kiss underlines Paul's view on the theme of holiness. Both aspects determine the epistolary meaning of the greeting with the holy kiss: the communication of the absent Paul with his addressees, and the recapitulation of an important Pauline theme of 'holiness'.

The second meaning of the greeting is closely connected with the epistolary meaning, that is, the theological meaning of the instruction to kiss one another. While the epistolary meaning concerns Paul's repetition and emphasis of the theme of 'holiness', the theological meaning expresses what holiness meant for Paul. Because Paul was a Jew before he converted to Christ, his ideas were most probably shaped by his Jewish background. In order to interpret his view on holiness, we should therefore also focus on 'holiness' as described in the Hebrew Bible. A central passage in Jewish thinking on holiness is Lev 19:1–2 'The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.'[24] In this passage holiness is connected to the holiness of God himself: because God is holy, his people should also be holy. In Paul's view people should be holy in Christ. 'Being holy' has implications for daily life. In 1 Cor, for instance, Paul elaborates on this theme and writes that a Christian cannot be united with a prostitute, because a Christian is a member of the body of Christ and this body

22 J.A.D. Weima, *Neglected Endings. The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings* (Sheffield 1994). See also Weima, 'Sincerely, Paul: The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings', 307–345.

23 Weima, *Neglected Endings*, 111–114; Weima, 'Sincerely, Paul: The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings', 330–332.

24 In his letters Paul does not refer explicitly to this passage.

should not be one body with a prostitute (1 Cor 6:13–20). This kind of behaviour does not correspond with the identity of a holy person. Furthermore, in 1 Cor 7:12–14 Paul again discusses the theme of holiness, now in connection with marriage. When two people are married, one of whom is a Christian and the other is not, the Christian sanctifies the non-Christian. Their children are also holy. Thus, holiness is very important for Paul and apparently holiness can be exchanged between different persons. These ideas of Paul are reflected in the greeting with a *holy* kiss.

The third meaning of the greeting with a holy kiss that can be and is constructed, is the familial meaning. Paul uses many images from family life in his letters: he refers to his addressees as brothers (and sisters), he writes about a mother who was also like a mother to him (Rom 16:13), and he addresses his hearers as children. Several scholars have pointed to this aspect of Paul's epistles.[25] Less attention has been given to the element of the greeting with a holy kiss as a possible component of this language, but, in my view, this is what it was. Just as the members of a biological family exchanged kisses, Paul's communities, which functioned as constructed Christian families, could greet one another with a kiss.

The fourth constructed meaning is the potential contra-hierarchical meaning of the greeting with a kiss. At the time in which Paul and the community members lived, kisses functioned in hierarchical situations and relations.[26] A so-called client kissed his patron in the morning in order to honour his status, hoping to receive financial or judicial support in the future. The content of this practice can be summarized by the motto *do ut des* ('I give in order to receive something in return'). Paul's letters show that such hierarchical considerations played a role in the society of which he was a part. In Rom 16, for example, he writes about Phoebe, who was a sister in Christ, a διάκονος, but also a προστάτις (Rom 16:1–2).[27] The masculine equivalent, προστάτης, is well

25 D. Von Allmen, *La famille de Dieu. La symbolique familiale dans le Paulinisme* (Göttingen 1981); M.P. Penn, 'Performing Family: Ritual Kissing and the Construction of Early Christian Kinship', *JECS* 10.2 (2002), 151–174; T.J. Burke, *Family Matters. A Socio-Historical Study of Kinship Metaphors in 1 Thessalonians* (London/New York 2003); R. Aasgaard, *'My Beloved Brothers and Sisters!' Christian Siblingship in Paul* (London/New York 2004). Penn does connect the theme 'kissing' with the construction of early Christian kinship, but he pays minimal attention to Paul's letters.

26 G. Binder, 'Kuß', *NP* 6 (1999), 939–947.

27 E.W. Stegemann and W. Stegemann, *Urchristliche Sozialgeschichte. Die Anfänge im Judentum und die Christusgemeinden in der mediterranen Welt* (Stuttgart 1995), 254; A. Merz, 'Phöbe, Diakon(in) der Gemeinde von Kenchreä—eine wichtige Mitstreiterin des Paulus neu entdeckt', in A.M. von Hauff (ed.), *Frauen gestalten Diakonie. Von der biblischen Zeit*

known and signifies the role of a wealthy or influential person as patron (cf. the Latin equivalent, *patronus*). The feminine προστάτις raises some problems of interpretation, but both διάκονος and προστάτις suggest that Phoebe was a figure of significance: a female with wealth and/or influence and a person of importance to Paul and the Roman recipients of the letter.[28] Furthermore, in 1 Cor it becomes clear that issues of status were not absent from Paul's communities: the problems concerning the sharing of meals seem to illustrate this (1 Cor 11:17–34). G. Theissen argued that women and men with a different status in society were part of the Pauline communities.[29] In my opinion, Paul used the greeting with a holy kiss as an instrument to bind these people together in the communities of Christ. The Pauline kiss thus functioned as a kind of counterpart to the kisses that expressed a difference in status. E. Ebel formulates this view as follows:

> In der Öffentlichkeit ist der Kuß eine Geste der Ehrerbietung eines Untergebenen bzw. der huldvollen Gewogenheit eines Höhergestellten und dient somit der Bestätigung und Demonstration hierarchischer Verhältnisse, wie sich beispielhaft an der morgendlichen *salutatio* von Patron und Klient zeigen läßt. Wenn dagegen bei Paulus bereits Ansätze einer "religiös-sozialen" Interpretation des Kusses im Sinne des "Bruderkusses" vorliegen, handelt es sich beim "heiligen Kuß" um eine deutliche Erweiterung bzw. Umkehrung des paganen Begrüßungskusses.[30]

In summary: four different, albeit connected meanings of the greeting with a holy kiss can be identified. Firstly, the epistolary meaning: although Paul is absent he communicates with his addressees through his letters and by means of the greeting with a holy kiss. Furthermore, by putting the instruction to greet one another with a holy kiss at the end of his letter, Paul recapitulates content he already discussed in that epistle. Secondly, the theological mean-

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bis zum Pietismus (Stuttgart 2007), 125–140; A. Merz, 'Patrones, beschermster, weldoenster of gewoon behulpzaam? Problemen bij de vertaling van de passage over Febe (Romeinen 16:1–2)', *Met andere woorden* 29.2 (2010), 11–21.

28 J.D.G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, Word Biblical Commentary 38 (Dallas 1988), 886–889; R. Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia, (Minneapolis 2007), 944–948; Merz, 'Phöbe, Diakon(in) der Gemeinde von Kenchreä—eine wichtige Mitstreiterin des Paulus neu entdeckt', 130–132.

29 G. Theissen, 'The Social Structure of Pauline Communities: Some Critical Remarks on J.J. Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival*', in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 84 (2001), 65–84 (73–75).

30 E. Ebel, *Die Attraktivität früher christlicher Gemeinden. Die Gemeinde von Korinth im Spiegel griechisch-römischer Vereine* (Tübingen 2004), 213, n. 188.

ing of the greeting is related to Paul's notion of a *holy* kiss. The adjective 'holy' is connected with Paul's Jewish awareness of holiness as expressed in Lev 19: 'you shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy', and with being holy in Christ. Thirdly, the familial meaning of the greeting with a kiss has come to the fore. Paul uses many images from biological family relations when he considers life in the Christian communities. He addresses his hearers with words known from family life. The greeting with a kiss has to be seen as part of this language. Fourthly, the potential contra-hierarchical meaning of the greeting with a kiss has been highlighted. Paul's instruction to greet one another with a holy kiss functioned as a counterpart to kisses that expressed difference in social status. A fifth meaning of the greeting with a holy kiss will be discussed in the next section.[31] Although these different meanings of the greeting with a holy kiss can be distinguished, there is one physical moment in which they all find expression: the kiss itself. The different meanings are, therefore, also closely connected.

3 Was the Greeting with a Holy Kiss a Ritual?

'Should the greeting with a holy kiss be denoted as a ritual?' This question fitted in with the theme of the conference which has resulted in this volume on the transformation of rituals in early Christianity. Several scholars do indeed define the greeting as a ritual, but the theoretical basis for this is often quite limited.[32] In my opinion, thorough theoretical argumentation is necessary before we apply the concept of 'ritual'. The concept has been considered and extensively discussed by various scholars. B. Boudewijnse, for instance, wrote an article about the views and the points under debate.[33] She discusses the research of J. Goody, who distinguished two standard ways of looking at the concept

31 In an earlier article (R. Voogd, 'Is a Kiss just a Kiss? The Pauline Kiss among other Kisses', in C. Breytenbach (ed.), *Paul's Graeco-Roman Context* (Leuven/Paris/Bristol 2015), 591–600) I constructed three varied meanings, an epistolary, a communal, and a theological meaning, while making the proviso that my research was still in progress and other meanings would possibly be constructed. After having concluded my research in 2016 (Voogd, *De betekenis van Paulus' oproep tot de groet met de heilige kus*), I distinguished five different albeit connected meanings. I now regard the earlier constructed communal meaning as part of the other five constructed meanings and not as a separate one.

32 L. Edward Phillips, *The ritual kiss in early Christian worship*, unpublished doctoral thesis, (University of Notre Dame 1992), 2; Penn, *Kissing Christians*, 17.

33 B. Boudewijnse, 'The conceptualization of ritual. A history of its problematic aspects', *Jaarboek voor Liturgie-Onderzoek* 11 (1995), 31–56 (31).

of ritual. On the one hand, some scholars consider all social action to be ritual, with the consequence that almost all standard acts are seen as ritual. As J. Goody puts it: '… we are then faced with a concept that includes such a broad range of activities, that it has no analytic utility and is certain to give rise to a proliferation of "subcategories".'[34] On the other hand, ritual is seen as a specific kind of action that requires special interpretation. In this case the problem arises how to determine the criteria that explain what is considered as ritual and what is not. Boudewijnse formulates it as follows: 'Is there really something "out there", that can be recognized as "ritual", or is ritual whatever we designate as such?'[35] She argues that it is useless to focus on a precise definition of ritual as a specific category or as a special aspect of action, because it does not have an objective status. But this does not mean that the whole concept should be rejected, because the concept can, according to Boudewijnse, be used as a general pointer that should be specified each time it is used.[36]

So is the greeting with a holy kiss a ritual? As I mentioned before, several authors indeed describe this greeting as a ritual, but in my opinion, more reflection is needed. I will first discuss the theory of two scholars: R. Grimes and C. Strecker.[37]

Grimes sums up a range of characteristics and stipulates that when a practice incorporates many of these elements it is reasonable to call it a ritual.[38] A few examples of these are repetition, a (recognizable) pattern, a communal act, and a physical act. All of these four elements apply to the greeting with a holy kiss: it is not a once-in-a-lifetime gesture and Paul instructs his readers to greet one another with this kiss without any explanation, which suggests that they were familiar with it. The pattern that can be recognized in the four letters in which Paul gives his instructions for greeting one another with a *holy* kiss, consists of an instruction in a letter, addressed to several people concerning a specific model of greeting with a kiss. Two other characteristics are also included in this pattern: it is an activity between different people and it is a

34 J. Goody, 'Against "Ritual": Loosely Structured Thoughts on a Loosely Defined Topic', in S.F. Moore and B.G. Myerhoff (eds), *Secular Ritual* (Assen 1977), 25–35, described in Boudewijnse, 'The conceptualization of ritual', 41.

35 Boudewijnse, 'The conceptualization of ritual', 43.

36 Boudewijnse, 'The conceptualization of ritual', 53.

37 R. Grimes, *Ritual Criticism. Case Studies in Its Practice, Essays on Its Theory* (Columbia 1990); C. Strecker, *Die liminale Theologie des Paulus. Zugänge zur paulinischen Theologie aus kulturanthropologischer Perspektive* (Göttingen 1999).

38 Grimes, *Ritual Criticism*, 14. See also Strecker, *Die liminale Theologie des Paulus*, 69–70.

physical gesture. These four characteristics indicate that according to Grimes' concept, the greeting with a holy kiss can be designated a ritual.

C. Strecker suggests a more precise connection between ritual theory and passages from the New Testament.[39] He constructs six ways in which rites and texts are interwoven. These ways are discussed in the book *The New Testament and its Ritual World*:[40]

1. A text includes instructions or commands for carrying out a rite. Strecker has in mind imperatival language embedded in a ritual setting, like "Do this in remembrance of me" (1Cor 11:24) or texts in which the performance of a rite is ordered (Acts 10:48).
2. A text reports the execution of a rite. Examples include Jesus' baptism (Mark 1:9–11), the Last Supper narrative (Mark 14:22–25), and the designation or initiation of early church leaders (Acts 6:1–6).
3. A text concerns itself with the meaning, function, or implementation of a rite. For instance, the synoptic gospels are filled with debate over the significance and value of Sabbath observance, purification, and fasting (Mark 2:23–28; 7:1–23; 2:18–20). Likewise, Paul poses interpretive questions like, "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ?" (1Cor 10:16).
4. A text stems directly from ritual use. Confessional and liturgical formulas have made their way into the New Testament, such as the christological hymns of Philippians 2:6–11 and Colossians 1:15–20.
5. A text has a ritual function in and of itself, such as the greeting and benediction at the end Paul's letters (e.g., Phil 4:21–23). (Paul's letters were read aloud to the recipients, so the reader would have pronounced the greeting and benediction on Paul's behalf.)
6. A text is connected synecdochically with a rite. What Strecker means by this is that a text may echo, allude to, or refer to a rite, even though the text may not be about ritual per se. For example, in reflecting about his efforts on behalf of the Philippians, Paul clearly alludes to ritual activity: "But even if I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you—and in the same way you also must be glad and rejoice with me" (Phil 2:17–18).[41]

39 Strecker, *Die liminale Theologie des Paulus*, 78.

40 R.E. DeMaris, *The New Testament in its Ritual World* (New York 2008).

41 DeMaris, *The New Testament in its Ritual World*, 5–6.

Statement one and five could both be applied to Paul's instruction to greet one another with a holy kiss. As regards point one: the four Pauline passages can be seen as an instruction for the performance of a rite. Point five is closely related to this: the text itself (that is, each of the four passages) has a ritual function. R.E. DeMaris reflects on this list and is both enthusiastic and careful, because he feels that an additional theoretical framework is necessary. However, based on the ritual theories of both Grimes and Strecker it can be concluded that there is a solid theoretical ground for designating the greeting with a holy kiss as a ritual.

4 Recapitulation

Was the greeting with a holy kiss which Paul instructed his readers to perform a Pauline transformation? I have argued that Paul did not make use of a convention when he asked his readers to greet one another with a kiss. Paul did use familiar elements from everyday life. But although kisses played a role in people's lives and also in letters, we have found no parallel for the manner in which Paul instructs people to kiss one another in his letters. Nevertheless, it is not possible to conclude that Paul invented a totally new gesture, because a greeting with a kiss may already have been a familiar act in communities before Paul. The precise origin of the practice is unknown. Due to a lack of evidence, the picture therefore remains somewhat unclear. On the other hand, the emphasis Paul placed on the theme of holiness by referring to a *holy* kiss does suggest that he used his own creativity in his instruction. His ideas regarding holiness are embodied in the practice of the greeting with a holy kiss. Thus, after considering the evidence concerning Paul and the world in which he lived, I conclude that Paul, using familiar elements from daily life and correspondence, transformed something known into something new.[42]

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42 I would like to thank Dr. M. Misset-van de Weg and Professor R. Roukema for commenting on the draft version of this article.

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CHAPTER 4

Eucharist and *Agapê* in the Later Second Century: The Case of the Older Apocryphal Acts and the Pagan Novel

Jan N. Bremmer

The chapter on the eucharistic liturgy in the recent *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* pays no attention to the Apocryphal Acts, limiting its scope to the Eucharist in the West. Nor does the recent *RAC* lemma on cultic meals contain a section on these Acts, instead jumping straight from Justin and Irenaeus to Clement of Alexandria.[1] A similar leap can be observed in Christoph Markschies' study of Christian theology and its institutions in the Roman imperial era, which moves directly from Justin to Tertullian.[2] Likewise, Andrew McGowan's informative recent book on early Christian worship pays less attention to the Apocryphal Acts in its discussion of the Eucharist than one would expect,[3] especially since he already studied most of the relevant passages in his dissertation; the same is true for Valeriy Alikin's study of early Christian gatherings.[4] Although Andreas Lindemann sets out to discuss sacramental celebrations in the second century in a recent essay, he stops with Justin, as if there was no mention of the Eucharist later in the century.[5] Finally, there is only one article on only two early Apocryphal Acts in a recent three-volume study of the early Eucharist.[6]

1 D. Sheerin, 'Eucharistic Liturgy', in S.A. Harvey and D.G. Hunter (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford 2008), 711–743; C. Leonhard and B. Eckhardt, 'Mahl v (Kultmahl)', in *RAC* 23 (2010), 1012–1105.

2 Ch. Markschies, *Kaiserzeitliche christliche Theologie und ihre Institutionen* (Tübingen 2007), 159–181 at 170.

3 A.B. McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids 2014), 19–64 and 'The Myth of the "Lord's Supper": Paul's Eucharistic Meal Terminology and Its Ancient Reception', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 77 (2015), 503–521; V. Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering: origin, development and content of the Christian gathering in the first to third centuries* (Leiden 2010), 140 f.

4 A.B. McGowan, *To Gather the Fragments: The Social Significance of Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (unpublished diss. Notre Dame IN, 1996), 262–278.

5 A. Lindemann, 'Sakramentale Praxis in Gemeinden des 2. Jahrhunderts', in M. Grundeken and J. Verheyden (eds), *Early Christian Communities between Ideal and Reality* (Tübingen 2015), 1–27.

6 J. Verheyden, 'Eating with Apostles: Eucharist and Table Fellowship in the Apocryphal Acts

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This neglect is unfortunate, since these Acts are our best witnesses, albeit in fictional form, of the cultic practices of early Christians in Asia Minor in the period between Justin Martyr and Tertullian/Cyprian. The oldest of these Acts, the *Acts of John* and the *Acts of Andrew*, originated in Asia Minor and belong to the late 160s and/or 170s, while the *Acts of Peter* and *Acts of Paul*, which also originated in Asia Minor, date to the last two decades of the second century. As the *Acts of Thomas* belong to a later period and different geographical area, I will focus on the earlier Acts, discussing them in chronological order. I will start with the *Acts of John* and the *Acts of Andrew*, which in general reflect an earlier stage in the development of Christology, ecclesiastical rites, institutions and interaction with Scripture (or lack thereof) (§§ 1–2).[7] I will then discuss the two later Acts, which seem somewhat more 'orthodox' (§§ 3–4). Following that, I will examine two passages from pagan novels, which are usually neglected in this discussion (§ 5). I will conclude with some observations about the two types of ritual meals, the Eucharist and the *agapê*, that appear in the Apocryphal Acts, and will also consider their origins and possible pagan influence on their development (§ 6).

1 The *Acts of John*

Let us begin with the *Acts of John* (*AJ*), which most scholars consider to be the earliest of the five major Apocryphal Acts.[8] As regards a *terminus post quem* for the date of the *AJ*, the author almost certainly knew the Greek novel by Chariton, who worked in the middle of the first century CE,[9] and also bor-

of the Apostles—The Evidence from the *Acts of John* and the *Acts of Thomas*', in D. Hellholm and D. Sänger (eds), *The Eucharist—Its Origins and Contexts: Sacred Meal, Communal Meal, Table Fellowship in Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity*, 3 vols (Tübingen 2018), 2.1055–1104. Verheyden has a different focus and especially concentrates on the context of the various episodes.

7 For a preliminary version of my study of these oldest Acts, see J.N. Bremmer, 'Eucharists and Other Meals in the Apocryphal *Acts of John* and *Acts of Andrew*', in S. Al-Suadi and P.-B. Smit (eds), *T&T Clark Handbook to Early Christian Meals in the Greco-Roman World* (London 2019), 197–210.

8 For the text and chapter numbers, I follow the authoritative edition by E. Junod and J.-D. Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis*, 2 vols (Turnhout 1983), the French translation of which has been updated in Junod and Kaestli, 'Actes de Jean', in F. Bovon and P. Geoltrain (eds), *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, 2 vols (Paris 1997–2005), 1.973–1037. I use and sometimes adapt the English translation by K. Schäferdiek, 'The Acts of John', in W. Schneemelcher and R.McL. Wilson (eds), *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2 vols (Cambridge 1992), 2.152–209 (the English translation is by Wilson).

9 Junod and Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis*, 2.691; P.J. Lalleman, 'Classical Echoes (Callimachus,

rowed the name 'Lycomedes' from the novel by Xenophon of Ephesus (1.1, 1.5 etc.), who wrote at some point between the late Flavian and early Antonine periods, perhaps even in the first years of Antoninus Pius.[10] A detail that has not received the attention it deserves suggests a date only slightly later than this one. In Ephesus, John commands Verus, 'the brother that served him', to convene old women (*AJ* 30). Verus' name is noteworthy. Here, a man with an imperial name—Lucius Verus was co-emperor with Marcus Aurelius from 161–169—is explicitly said to serve the apostle. Since 'Verus' does not occur as a personal name in any other text or inscription from Asia Minor, the area where the author of *AJ* lived, the latter must have been thinking about Lucius Verus. As he would hardly have selected this name long after Verus' death (169), this detail—along with evident knowledge of the two Greek novels, pre-Valentinian Gnostic tendencies, a specific form of docetic Christology,[11] and neglect of the Old Testament and the epistles of Paul—supports the frequent suggestion that the *AJ* originated in the 160s.

As regards the place of composition, scholars have not yet recognized the rarity of the name 'Drusiana' in the ancient world, and the significance of the fact that it appears in the *AJ*. Only two other occurrences of the name are known. One of these Drusianas, the daughter of M. Flavius Drusianus from Rome (*CIL* 6.1414: c. 200), is too late to be relevant. Much more intriguing is the other occurrence, a reference to Τεττία Δρουσιανή, wife of Π. Αἴλιος Ἀσκληπιάδης, Νεικομηδέων βουλευτής, a man whose tombstone was erected at Dorylaion in northern Phrygia, but who was himself a Nicomedian and member of the Nicomedian *boulê*.[12] Given its extreme rarity, the use of this name in the *AJ* is highly significant: the author probably borrowed it from a local honorific or funeral inscription for this second Drusiana. If this seems far-fetched, one might point out that it is not the only instance where the author of a Christian 'novel' was inspired by an inscription. The *Acts of Peter* probably borrowed

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Chariton) in the *Acta Iohannis*', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 116 (1997), 66 and *The Acts of John: A Two-Stage Initiation into Johannine Gnosticism* (Leuven 1998), 149; S. Tilg, *Chariton of Aphrodisias and the Invention of the Greek Love Novel* (Oxford 2010), 65.

10 K. Coleman, 'Sailing to Nuceria: Evidence for the Date of Xenophon of Ephesus', *Acta Classica* 54 (2011), 27–41.

11 Lalleman, *The Acts of John*, 270. For a survey of modern studies of the *AJ*, see A. Jakab, '*Actes de Jean*: État de la recherche (1892–1999)', *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 36 (2000), 299–334; and the important analysis by J.A. Snyder, *Language and Identity in Ancient Narratives* (Tübingen 2014), 90–141.

12 A. Koerte, 'Kleinasiatische Studien VI', *Athenische Mitteilungen* 25 (1900), 398–444 at 427 n. 45. The husband is dated to the second/third century CE by the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names V.A.*, ed. T. Corsten (Oxford 2010), s.v. Asklepiades (40).

names from inscriptions mentioning Granius Marcellus (§ 3), a pro-consul of Bithynia under Augustus, and Q. Iulius Balbus, proconsul of Asia in 100/101 or 101/102, while the *Acts of Paul* adopted the names of a queen called Tryphaena and the wife of a consul in 163 called Falconilla.[13] At any event, Drusiana's name suggests that the author of the *AJ* almost certainly came from Nicomedia. Previous studies have persuasively argued for a Bithynian origin for the *Acts of Andrew* and the *Acts of Peter*, works that have long been considered similar to the *AJ*,[14] and an origin in Nicomedia specifically—which was also suggested long ago for the *Acts of Peter* and is not improbable for the *Acts of Andrew*—thus seems a compelling solution to the quest for the original place of composition of the *Acts of John*.[15]

Let us now turn to the text itself. Unfortunately, we cannot be too certain about the precise wording of the text, as the fluidity of the manuscript tradition means that extant manuscripts give us only 'a snapshot of an evolving textual tradition'.[16] Nevertheless, the text as constituted by Junod and Kaestli is sufficiently plausible to allow us to make some observations about the Eucharist and other ritual meals in the *AJ*. A first such meal takes place in Ephesus. After the temple of Artemis collapses with fatal results, a kinsman of the priest of Artemis lays the priest's body in front of the door of Andronicus' house, where John is staying.[17] Although the kinsman does not tell anyone, the apostle notices it. As might be expected, the apostle resurrects the priest, although not before 'a homily to the brethren, a prayer, the Eucharist and the laying on of hands on each person assembled' (46). The prayer is probably one of thanksgiving, as in other references to the Eucharist in extant sources (see below), but the laying on of hands, although it is a well-attested part of baptismal and ordination rituals in other sources, is not usually associated with the Eucharist and is therefore probably a local peculiarity of Nicomedia (and its environs).[18] Junod

13 Cf. J.N. Bremmer, 'The Onomastics and Provenance of the *Acts of Paul*', in F. Barone et al. (eds), *Philologie, herméneutique et histoire des textes entre orient et occident* (Turnhout 2017), 527–547.

14 Junod and Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis*, 2.698 provides a list of similarities. See also J.-M. Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 2 vols (Turnhout 1989), 1.394–400.

15 I am summarizing the results of my latest investigations into the provenance and date of the *AJ*, *AA* and *APt*, cf. J.N. Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs in Early Christianity: Collected Essays I* (Tübingen 2017), 221–225.

16 Snyder, *Language and Identity*, 96.

17 On the priest, see J.N. Bremmer, 'Cult Personnel of the Ephesian Artemision: Anatolian, Persian, Greek and Roman Aspects', in B. Dignas and K. Trampedach (eds), *Practitioners of the Divine in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge MA 2008), 37–53.

18 Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering*, 260–266. The passage is not mentioned by McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship*, 157–160.

and Kaestli persuasively argue that the Eucharist in this scene takes place at the end of the service, as in the *Acts of Andrew* (13).[19] It is not clear precisely what the Eucharist involves, but the order of events suggests a specific ritual act. Although a time of day is not specified, the fact that the text shortly thereafter mentions 'the next day' (48: Τῇ δὲ ἑξῆς ἡμέρᾳ) suggests that the event takes place in the evening.

A second Eucharist in the *AJ* also takes place in Ephesus. Drusiana dies of grief because a rich young man named Callimachus (whose name suggests that the author had pretensions to high culture) has fallen in love with her, despite the fact that she is married. After her burial, Callimachus bribes the steward of her husband Andronicus to open Drusiana's grave. Just before Callimachus and the steward Fortunatus expose her nudity, a serpent appears, killing the steward and pinning the young lover to the ground (63–71).

The next morning—that is, on the third day—the apostle comes to the grave with 'Andronicus and the brethren' (…) 'so that we might break bread there' (72). The scene is clearly reminiscent of the resurrection of Christ, a connection strengthened by the fact that Callimachus sees a handsome young man with a shining face in the grave, presumably an angel. John raises Callimachus from the ground. The latter immediately converts and resurrects Drusiana. In turn, she resurrects Fortunatus, but he runs away instead of joining John and his group (73–83). His rejection of salvation motivates John to give a brief speech which at first seems directed at the absent Fortunatus, to whom he says:

> Be removed from those who hope in the Lord (…) from their fasting, from their prayers, from their holy bath, from their Eucharist (ἀπὸ εὐχαριστίας), from the nourishment of their flesh, from their drink, from their clothing, from their love-meal (ἀπὸ ἀγάπης), from their care for the dead, from their continence, from their justice.
>
> *AJ* 84

The speech is interesting, because it shows that there were two different meals in the author's community: the Eucharist and the *agapê*. Both of these meals are well-attested in other early Christian sources, but the *AJ* is the only text to mention both.[20] In this scene, the Eucharist is clearly a ritual act, but exactly what this act entails is left unspecified. It seems probable that bread is involved (see above), an issue to which we will return below.

19 Junod and Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis*, 2.512.

20 This passage is also used in a fragmentary Manichaean papyrus, cf. O. Zwierlein, *Petrus und Paulus in Jerusalem und Rom* (Berlin/Boston 2013), 251–257.

The *AJ* provides a number of details about how the Eucharist is performed on this particular morning. John starts out by glorifying and thanking God: 'We glorify (δοξάζομέν) your name that converts us from error and pitiless deceit' and 'we thank you (εὐχαριστοῦμέν) who did have need ⟨ ⟩ of (our) nature that is being saved' (85). Roldanus, in an otherwise perceptive study of the Eucharist in the *AJ*,[21] thinks the apostle leaves the sepulchre before partaking of the Eucharist, but the text clearly says that John brought the bread *into* Drusiana's sepulchre (85). In a way, the sepulchre stands in for the house church where morning assemblies would normally have taken place.[22] Although the author does not say so explicitly, it seems clear that both the brothers and Drusiana take part in the ritual: the Eucharist is for all believers, not just the male ones. As is usual in the *AJ*, the addressee of John's prayer is not specified right at the beginning. Instead, John starts directly with a doxology and only mentions the addressee in the course of the prayer: 'Lord' (κύριε) and 'Lord Jesus Christ' (κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ). John glorifies and thanks God on behalf of the other Christians present as well as himself, saying that it is 'we your slaves, that are assembled and restored with (good) cause', who are giving thanks. The prayer constitutes a kind of explanation for the distribution of the Eucharist, but there is no mention of Jesus' institution of the Eucharist nor are there any remarks about the elements that are distributed.

We now turn to the third Eucharist in the *AJ*. Just before his death, John offers another prayer before a Eucharist. This time the addressee (Jesus) is mentioned fairly early on, although his name comes at the end of the phrase 'O you who have woven this crown for your plait', which focuses attention on the symbolic crown of martyrdom.[23] After this prayer, John asks for bread and offers another

21 H. Roldanus, 'Die Eucharistie in den Johannesakten', in J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of John* (Kampen 1995), 72–96 at 79.

22 Regarding house churches, see most recently C. Osiek and M.Y. MacDonald, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis 2006); U. Mell, *Christliche Hauskirche und Neues Testament: Die Ikonologie des Baptisteriums von Dura Europos und das Diatessaron Tatians* (Göttingen 2010); E. Adams, *The Earliest Christian Meeting Places: Almost Exclusively Houses?* (London, 2013); J. Patrich, 'The Early Christianization of the Holy Land—The Archaeological Evidence', in O. Brandt and G. Castiglia (eds), *Costantino e i Costantinidi: L'innovazione Costantiniana, le sue radici e i suoi sviluppi*, 2 vols (Vatican City 2016), 1.265–293 at 268–272 ('Christian Houses of Assembly [Domus Ecclesiae]'); N. Belayche, 'Les cohabitations religieuses dans la Galilée (Palaestina) du III^e^ siècle: des chrétiens dans le camp romain de Legio, future Maximianopolis?', *La Parola del Passato* 71 (2016 [2019]), 91–114; J.N. Bremmer, 'Urban Religion, Neighbourhoods and the Early Christian Meeting Places', *Religion in the Roman Empire* 6 (2020), 48–74.

23 *AJ* 108.1: Ὁ τὸν στέφανον τοῦτον πλέξας τῇ σῇ πλοκῇ Ἰησοῦ. The invocation of θεὲ Χριστὲ

prayer in which he again gives glory and thanks,[24] as well as offering a long list of descriptors of Jesus, the relevance of which for the Eucharist is unclear. Allusions in this passage suggest that the author had access to the Gospels, although he does not quote them word-for-word.[25] As Junod and Kaestli observe, however, there are a number of reasons to think that the passage dates from a later period and does not belong to the original text.[26]

After his prayer, John breaks the bread and prays that each of the brothers—and surely each of the sisters as well, since there is no reason to suppose that Drusiana is now absent—will be worthy of the Lord's grace and the most holy Eucharist (110: τῆς ἁγιωτάτης εὐχαριστίας). The latter expression suggests that the author attached great importance to the Eucharist, as this is the only passage in early Christianity in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire where the Eucharist is described as 'most holy'.[27] The author's respect for the Eucharist probably also explains his stress on the fact that John himself partakes of it, a detail not mentioned in the two earlier Eucharist scenes. Unfortunately, the author does not specify what elements are consumed at this Eucharist or the time of day when it takes place. The fact that John and his party leave Andronicus' house after the meal without any mention of dusk, darkness, or night perhaps suggests that this Eucharist is distributed early in the morning.

There is another important question to address: what elements are used at Eucharists in this community? It is striking that the text only mentions bread, and does not refer to water or wine. In chapter 72 we read that the apostle and the brothers go to Drusiana's grave 'to break bread there' (ὅπως ἄρτον κλάσωμεν ἐκεῖ); in 85, John takes bread and brings it into the grave in order to break it (λαβὼν ἄρτον ἐκόμισεν εἰς τὸ μνῆμα κλάσαι); and in 110 he actually breaks it and gives pieces to the brothers (Καὶ κλάσας τὸν ἄρτον ἐπέδωκεν πᾶσιν ἡμῖν). It seems that wine was not part of the Eucharist in this community, which suggests that

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Ἰησοῦ κύριε in this chapter deserves more attention than it has received in the discussion of so-called Christomonism in the *AJ*, cf. B. Paschke, 'Christomonism? A Narrative-Critical Analysis of Two Prayers to God the Father in the Apocryphal Acts of John', *Biblische Notizen/Biblical Notes* 163 (2014), 121–134 and 'Die Anfänge des Christomonismus in den apokryphen Johannesakten', *Zeitsschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 67 (2015), 85–89.

24 See also Markschies, *Kaiserzeitliche Theologie*, 185–187.

25 This is clear from the references collected by Junod and Kaestli *ad AJ* 109.

26 Junod and Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis*, 2.700–702 and 'Actes de Jean', 1034 n. 109.

27 Leonhard and Eckhardt, 'Mahl v (Kultmahl)', 1075 wrongly state that the Eucharist is called 'holy' in *Didache* 10.6. This is communicated indirectly in 9.5, however: 'Do not give what is holy (i.e., the Eucharist) to the dogs'.

the community was somewhat ascetic, even if it was a moderate asceticism.[28] On the other hand, the absence of any reference to wine is also consistent with other early Christian texts: Luke likewise only mentions bread (Luke 24:30, 35; Acts 2:42, 46; 20:11; 27:35).

To conclude, in the *AJ* the Eucharist could be celebrated both in the morning and, probably, the evening. It is not limited to the Sunday, which is not mentioned anywhere, and could also be celebrated on important occasions. It is distinct from the *agapê*, but we do not hear in what way.

2 The *Acts of Andrew*

Modern editions of the *Acts of Andrew* (*AA*) combine a variety of Latin, Greek, and Coptic texts written at different times for different purposes. As my former colleague Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta has convincingly argued, the oldest and most primitive text is that of *Codex Vaticanus 808*, but the other witnesses cannot be wholly neglected.[29] As we have already seen, there are a number of close parallels between the *AJ* and the *AA*, which suggest that they were composed at about the same time. Although the state of the textual tradition makes it difficult to determine who borrowed from whom, there seems to be a consensus that the *AA* borrowed from the *AJ*.[30] Since the author of the *AA* had read Achilles Tatius' novel *Leucippe and Clitophon*, this puts the date of the *AA* around 170, given its dependence on the *AJ*.[31] Its Middle Platonic elements also fit this dating.[32] The *AA* was probably written in Pontus, which would explain its awkward geographical scope: Andrew spends time in Pontus and Bithynia, and is then martyred in Patras,[33] a city of which the author displays hardly any

28 This is persuasively argued by Lalleman, *Acts of John*, 217–244.

29 L. Roig Lanzillotta, *Acta Andreae Apocrypha* (Geneva 2007), summarized as 'The *Acts of Andrew*. A New Perspective on the Primitive Tekst', *CFC (g): Estudios griegos e indoeuropeos* 20 (2010): 247–259. I use the edition by Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 1.394–400, with corrections by Roig Lanzillotta, *Acta Andreae Apocrypha*, and the translation by J.-M. Prieur and W. Schneemelcher, 'The Acts of Andrew', in Schneemelcher and Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2.101–151.

30 See P.J. Lalleman, 'The *Acts of Andrew* and the *Acts of John*', in J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Andrew* (Leuven 2000), 140–148.

31 Roig Lanzillotta, *Acta Andreae Apocrypha*, 147, 271 (parallel with Achilles Tatius).

32 Roig Lanzillotta, *Acta Andreae Apocrypha*, 191–265.

33 X. Lequeux, 'Les anciennes Passions latines de l'Apôtre André', in E.G. Saradi and D. Triantaphyllopoulos (eds), *Ὁ Απόστολος Ανδρέας στην ιστορία και την τέχνη* (Patras 2013), 9–16.

real knowledge.[34] In any case, the vocabulary used for elite and civic virtues makes it unlikely that the *Acts of Andrew* was written outside Asia Minor.[35]

There are only two references to the Eucharist in the *AA*, and we will examine these as they appear in extant sources, given our incomplete knowledge of the original text. At the end of the sixth century, Gregory of Tours wrote a *Liber de miraculis beati Andreae apostoli* (= *AALat*), an abbreviated version of a longer Latin translation of the originally Greek *Acts of Andrew*. Gregory cut out most of the original speeches, and also updated some of the miracles.[36] Because of his methods, it is often difficult to determine whether a specific detail is original or not. This is also the case in the following reference to the Eucharist: when the son of Gratinus of Sinope is tortured by a demon in a women's bath, his father asks the proconsul to prevail on Andrew to come and heal his son, as well as himself and his wife. The apostle does as he is asked and heals all of them. Interestingly, after the wife's healing it is reported: 'Then the blessed apostle broke bread and gave it to her. When she had given thanks, she took it and believed in the Lord with her whole house.'[37] The description is not very informative, but it clearly suggests that giving thanks preceded actual partaking in the Eucharist.

The scene as a whole undoubtedly belongs to the original *AA*, given its location in Pontic Sinope. Specific elements of the scene, including the healings, exorcism, and reference to sexual sins also seem original, since asceticism appears elsewhere in the *AA*. This leads me to believe that the Eucharist also belongs to the original text. If Gregory had added the reference to the Eucharist himself, one would have expected him to add similar instances in other scenes. Furthermore, the fact that we only hear about bread, not about wine or water, and that no institution narrative is provided, suits the date of the *AA* better than that of Gregory, as the latter surely would have given us a description of

34 Cf. A. Weiss, 'Lokalkolorit in der Apostelgeschichte des Lukas und in den apokryphen Apostelgeschichten—Realitätseffekt oder Authentizitätsmarker? Ein Vergleich', in J. Thiessen (ed.), *Die Apostelgeschichte des Lukas in ihrem historischen Kontext* (Münster/Zürich 2013), 9–28 at 13–15.

35 Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs*, 115–119.

36 Gregorius Turonensis, *Liber de miraculis Andreae apostoli*, ed. M. Bonnet (Hannover 1885), 376–396, reprinted, along with a French translation, in Prieur, *Acta Andreae*, 2.551–651. I use the English translation by D. MacDonald, *The Acts of Andrew* (Santa Rosa CA 2005), 43–76. Regarding Gregory's treatment of the text, see also L. van Kampen, '*Acta Andreae* and Gregory's *De miraculis Andreae*', *VC* 45 (1991), 18–26.

37 *AALat* 5: *beatus autem apostolus fregit panem et dedit ei. Quae gratias agens accepit et credidit in Domino cum omni domo sua.* On such household conversions, see Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs*, 181–196.

an orthodox Eucharist. The thanksgiving also matches what we have seen in the *Acts of John*.

The authenticity of the Eucharist in the scene discussed above seems to be confirmed by a second Eucharist in the Latin version of the *AA*. After the apostle had preached for five days, 'he received the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to all, saying, "Receive the grace which Christ the Lord our God gives you through me his servant"'.[38] Once again, a thanksgiving is included, and we only hear about the breaking of bread, not about wine or water.[39]

To conclude, the *AA* contains two celebrations of the Eucharist, but we hear nothing about the time they are performed or about an *agapê*.

3 The *Acts of Peter*

The *Acts of Peter* (*APt*) were probably written in the last two decades of the second century, just before those of Paul, and possibly in Bithynia, given the attention devoted to Bithynians and the mention of a senator named Marcellus (4), whose name was probably inspired by that of Granius Marcellus (see above, §1).[40] More specifically, there are reasons to suggest Nicomedia as the place of composition. The existence of a Christian congregation in this city is attested by a letter from Dionysius of Corinth written around 170, which warns about Marcion (Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 4.23), and various inscriptions witness to the existence of a Jewish community.[41] In any case, northern Asia Minor seems like a reasonable supposition. As with the *Acts of Andrew*, the *APt* has been transmitted only fragmentarily. The largest surviving section, the so-called *Actus Vercellenses*, depicts a contest between Peter and Simon Magus, and is preserved in a fourth-century Latin translation. Otherwise, we only have

38 *AALat* 20: *Et accipiens panem, gratias agens fregit et dedit omnibus, dicens: 'Accipite gratiam quem vobis tradit per me famulum suum Christus dominus Deus noster'.*

39 This passage needs to be added to the 'dossier' collected by G. Rouwhorst, 'L'usage et le non-usage du vin', in A. Lossky and M. Sodi (eds), *Rites de communion* (Vatican City 2010), 229–241 at 232–236. Rouwhorst's essay is a stimulating discussion of various explanations for non-usage of wine, and includes an excellent bibliography; to this, add W. Wischmeyer (ed.), *Aus der Werkstatt Harnacks: Transkription Harnackscher Seminarprotokolle Hans von Sodens* (*Sommersemester 1904–Wintersemester 1905/06*) (Berlin/New York 2004), 38–47.

40 On the provenance and date, see Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs*, 143–147. The criticism of this dating by M.C. Baldwin, *Whose Acts of Peter?* (Tübingen 2005) is not persuasive.

41 W. Ameling, *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis II: Kleinasien* (Tübingen 2004), 324–332.

a small papyrus fragment of the original Greek *APt*, but a fragment in a Coptic papyrus is also preserved, which contains a celebration of the Eucharist.

In the passage in question from the Coptic papyrus, Peter relates how a certain Ptolemaeus once fell in love with a girl, whom he probably abducted. She became paralysed on one side, and Ptolemaeus was so desperate that he wanted to hang himself. God intervened, however, and he became converted instead. After telling this story, Peter 'glorified the name of Jesus Christ and gave of the bread to them all. And when he had distributed it, he rose up and went home'.[42] Although the reference to the Eucharist is extremely short, it is clear that the distribution of the bread is preceded by a doxology, that the bread is distributed by the most important person present (Peter), and that neither wine nor water are mentioned. We are told at the beginning of the fragment that the scene takes place on a Sunday. This seems to have been the normal day for the Eucharist from very early on, as the *Didache* (14.1),[43] Justin (*Apologia* 1.67), and the canonical Acts (20:7, 11) attest.[44] In Acts 20, the Eucharist clearly takes place in the evening, and our fragment may also imply an evening celebration, since, after performing a miracle, Peter 'continued speaking before them all'—but the text does not enable us to pinpoint the precise time.

Eucharistic celebrations also appear in the *Actus Vercellenses*. At the beginning of the fragment, Paul departs from Rome to go to Spain, obviously in order to clear the way for Peter. After an epiphany of God—only his voice is heard, as is usual in texts directed at more sophisticated audiences[45]—the brothers bring Paul bread and water as a 'sacrifice' (*sacrificium*) for him to distribute (after a prayer). The Latin text uses the term *eucharistia* for the ritual, which shows that the Romans had adopted Greek terminology. The accompanying prayer is presumably a thanksgiving (see below), and the elements consist of

42 I am slightly adapting the translation by W. Schneemelcher, 'Acts of Peter', in id. and Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2.271–321 at 286. For a full commentary, see M. Tardieu, *Écrits gnostiques* (Paris 1984), 217–222 (French translation with *parallella potiora*), 403–410 (commentary); see also J. Dochhorn, 'Peter's Daughter. A Case Story from Late Antiquity', in E.-M. Becker et al. (eds), *Trauma and Traumatization in Individual and Collective Dimension. Insights from Biblical Studies and Beyond* (Göttingen 2014), 85–99; M. Henning, 'Chreia Elaboration and the Un-healing of Peter's Daughter: Rhetorical Analysis as a Clue to Understanding the Development of a Petrine Tradition', *JECS* 24 (2016), 145–171.

43 For the Eucharist in the *Didache*, see D.-A. Koch, 'Eucharistievollzug und Eucharistieverständnis in der Didache', in Hellholm and Sänger, *The Eucharist*, 2.845–881.

44 See also W. Rordorf, *Liturgie, foi et vie des premiers Chrétiens* (Paris 1986[2]), 59–71 ('La célébration dominicale de la sainte Cène dans l'Église ancienne', 1966[1]); H.J. de Jonge, 'The Origins of the Sunday Eucharist', *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 92 (2016), 549–579.

45 J.N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden 2008), 230.

bread and water, which is more ascetic than bread and wine (*APt* 2). Such ascetic Eucharists were not unusual in this period, although Ignatius of Antioch, who, I believe, wrote around 150 or even later,[46] never mentions the precise contents of the cup, whereas Justin Martyr's account probably presupposes wine.[47] Irenaeus (*Adversus haereses* 5.1.3) and Clement (*Paedagogus* 2.2) both polemicize against the use of water in the cup, which was evidently an established custom in some circles, and water Eucharists are known to have been practised by a number of congregations in Asia Minor and Syria.[48]

The text proceeds by recounting a most interesting event that occurred at this particular Eucharist (*APt* 2). A woman called Rufina, a very popular name in northern and western Asia Minor, approaches the apostle in order to receive the Eucharist from his hands. Apparently, the apostle is standing at the front and people are coming forward to receive the bread and water, and it seems reasonable to assume that this reflects actual practices in the congregation of the (anonymous) author. However, Paul rejects Rufina commenting that she has risen from the bed of an adulterer and not that of her own husband. He calls upon her to repent and threatens her with consuming fire and outer darkness. Rufina then collapses, paralysed on the left side and unable to speak. Interestingly, we hear nothing about her repenting or being healed. The story is clearly designed to offer a frightening example of what happens when members of the congregation partake of the Eucharist while living in sin.

For the author of our text, the Eucharist seems to have been a well-established ritual, since we soon hear of another celebration of the Eucharist. When Peter was on his way from Caesarea to Rome, he converted the captain of his ship, Theon, who then wanted to be baptized. After his baptism, they entered his cabin and

> Peter took bread and gave thanks to the Lord, who had accounted him worthy of his holy service (…) And he said: 'Most excellent, the only holy one, it is you that has appeared to us, you Jesus Christ; in your name has Theon been washed and signed with your holy sign. Therefore in your

46 Cf. T. Barnes, 'The Date of Ignatius', *Expository Times* 120 (2008), 119–130.

47 For more detailed analyses, see L. Wehr, 'Die Eucharistie in den Briefen des Ignatius von Antiochien' and A. Lindemann, 'Die eucharistische Mahlfeier bei Justin und bei Irenäus', in Hellholm and Sänger, *The Eucharist*, 2.883–899 and 901–933, respectively.

48 Cf. A. Harnack, 'Brot und Wasser: Die eucharistischen Elemente bei Justin', in his *Über das gnostische Buch Pistis-Sophia* (Leipzig 1891), 115–144; Roldanus, 'Die Eucharistie in den Johannesakten'; A.B. McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual* (Oxford 1999), 89–142.

> name I impart to him your Eucharist, that he may be your perfect servant without blame for ever'.
>
> *APt* 5

Unfortunately, the text does not give any further details about this Eucharist, and nothing is said about water or wine, but it is interesting that the captain needs to be 'worthy' to be baptized and receive the Eucharist—one more indication of the significance of this early Christian ritual.[49]

Although we have several Eucharists in the *APt*, only the one in the Coptic papyrus can perhaps be located on a Sunday evening. We have no other information, nor do we hear anything about an *agapê*.

4 The *Acts of Paul*

Tertullian writes in his *De baptismo* that the *Acts of Paul* was a forgery by a presbyter in Asia Minor.[50] This firmly places the date of these *Acts* before 200, and it is also an important piece of information for the dating of other Apocryphal Acts. Given that the author of the *Acts of Paul* knew the *Acts of Peter*, we can assume that the former were composed in the last decade of the second century. Tertullian does not specify where the presbyter lived within Asia Minor, but a study of names appearing in the *Acts of Paul* clearly points to the southwestern part, perhaps even Iconium, where the cult of Thecla had a long life.[51] Unfortunately, the *Acts* has to be reconstructed from a series of Greek and Coptic fragments, but enough has survived to give us a good impression of its content.[52]

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49 See also H.U. Weidemann, *Taufe und Mahlgemeinschaft. Studien zur Vorgeschichte der altkirchlichen Taufeucharistie* (Tübingen 2015).

50 On *De baptismo* 7, see A. Hilhorst, 'Tertullian on the Acts of Paul', in J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla* (Kampen 1996), 150–163 at 150–158; G. Poupon, 'Encore une fois: Tertullien, *De baptismo* 17,5', in D. Knoepfler (ed.), *Mélanges de langue, de littérature et de civilisation latines offerts au professeur André Schneider* (Neuchâtel and Geneva 1997), 199–203.

51 See most recently Zwierlein, *Petrus und Paulus in Jerusalem und Rom*, 214–218; J.N. Bremmer, 'The Onomastics and Provenance of the *Acts of Paul*'; A. Arbeiter, 'El santuario de Tecla (Ayatkla) en Seleucia', in J.W. Barrier et al. (eds), *Thecla: Paul's Disciple and Saint in the East and West* (Leuven 2017), 152–204; C. Breytenbach and C. Zimmermann, *Early Christianity in Lycaonia and Adjacent Areas* (Leiden, 2018), 96–126.

52 Until this volume appears in the new Markschies-Schröter, *Antike christliche Apokryphen*, the best one can do is to consult Bovon and Geoltrain, *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, 1.1127–1177 (translation by W. Rordorf et al.), whose numbering I follow. I use the translation by

The first probable mention of the Eucharist occurs in a scene set in Iconium.[53] A man named Onesiphorus meets Paul on the Via Sebaste and brings him home, where there is 'great joy, and bowing of knees and breaking of bread, and the word of God concerning continence and resurrection' (3.5). Interestingly, there is no mention of water or wine, and the Eucharist seems to have been performed as a one-off event occasioned by Paul's arrival.

Instead of a Eucharist, we hear of an *agapê*, although the first example is debated, during Paul's visit of Ephesus. His stay is described in a text for which there is now a proper edition, albeit in Coptic.[54] The story takes place during the season of Pentecost, a rare early reference to this Christian festive season—and one that is not usually mentioned in the secondary literature.[55] The narrative gives us a glimpse of what Christian life may have looked like in a big city like Ephesus, and contains the following description: 'But Paul could not be unhappy because of the Pentecost season, as it was like a (pagan? JNB) festival for those who had come to believe in Christ, both the catechumens and the believers. And there was great joy and *ourat nagape*, songs and praises addressed to Christ, serving to strengthen those who heard' (9.4, see also 14). Rordorf and Pervo translate *nagape* in the latter passage with 'love', while Kasser and Luisier opt for *agapê* (the meal). However, Jacques van der Vliet has told me that the relevant Coptic expression, *ourat nagape*, should be translated as 'charitable zeal' and that it does not refer to a ritual meal,[56] which would indeed be somewhat out of place in this description of the Pentecost season.

However, the notion of *agapê* also occurs shortly afterwards in the Coptic text, where it now unmistakably refers to a meal. After evoking the joy of Pentecost, Paul tells about his stay in Damascus after his conversion (9.5–6), and

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W. Schneemelcher and R. Kasser, 'The Acts of Paul', in Schneemelcher and Wilson, *New Testament Apocrypha*, 2.213–270; see also the recent translation by R. Pervo, *The Acts of Paul* (Eugene 2014).

53 See also, although with a different interest, A. Merz, 'Tränken und Nähren mit dem Wort. Der Beitrag der Mahlszenen zur narrativen Theologie der Paulusakten', in J. Hartenstein et al. (eds), *'Eine gewöhnliche und harmlose Speise'? Von den Entwicklungen frühchristlicher Abendmahlstraditionen* (Gütersloh 2008), 269–295.

54 R. Kasser and P. Luisier, 'Le Papyrus Bodmer XLI en édition princeps. L'épisode d'Ephèse des Acta Pauli en Copte et en traduction', *Le Muséon* 117 (2004), 281–384.

55 On early references to Pentecost, see G. Rouwhorst, 'The Origins and Evolution of Early Christian Pentecost', *SP* 35 (2001), 309–322; P.F. Bradshaw and M.E. Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts, Fasts and Seasons in Early Christianity* (London 2011), 70; McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship*, 239.

56 By email of 16-9-2016.

how he had left the city one evening after enjoying an *agapê* with the widow Lemma and her daughter Ammia (9.7). This is an interesting remark, since it indicates the importance of wealthy widows in the Christian community and also the presence of women at the *agapê*.[57] Unfortunately, the passage does not specify what was eaten at the *agapê* or any other details about the event.

We are better informed regarding the second Eucharist. After Paul baptizes Artemilla in the sea, they return to the house of her husband Hieronymus, where Paul 'broke bread and brought water, gave her to drink of the word and dismissed Artemilla to her husband Hieronymus' (9.21). Here we have a Eucharist that takes place immediately after a baptism, as in the case of the captain Theon in the *Acts of Peter*. Water is also mentioned instead of wine: we are clearly in an ascetic milieu.

In the third Eucharist, Paul is in Corinth, where the brothers and sisters have been fasting. Paul makes a sacrifice (*thysia*), and the bread seems to break into pieces by itself (although the papyrus is corrupt here: 12.4). Paul refuses to offer an explanation, but a woman named Myrta explains the sign: it means that Paul will feed many people with the Word, so many that it will be impossible to count them. After this reassuring explanation, everyone present receives a piece of bread, and they sing psalms of David and hymns. Since the text goes on to report that they talk all night, we can safely conclude that these events take place in the evening (12.5). Although the passage is brief and transmitted fragmentarily, it is very informative. It tells us that the Eucharist is performed by Paul, who is clearly the most important person present. It takes place in the evening, is also called a 'sacrifice', and there is no mention of wine or water. The reference to the bread breaking itself into pieces is curious, but Myrta's explanation is consistent with a Greek tradition where the term *automatos* is often connected with abundance: the word typically appears in descriptions of the Golden Age, where it refers to the abundance of food that will be available.[58]

The *Acts of Paul*, then, mentions several Eucharists, one of which takes place in the evening, but the other two on special occasions: the arrival of Paul and the baptism of Artemilla. The Eucharist is clearly distinguished from the *agapê*, which is celebrated in the evening.

57 For the prominence of widows in the early Church, see Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs*, 43–64.

58 H.S. Versnel, *Transition and Reversal in Myth and Ritual* (Leiden 1993), 122–124.

5 Achilles Tatius and Apuleius

In 1994, the well-known ancient historian Glen Bowersock noted that 'parallels in form and substance between the writings of the New Testament and the fictional production of the imperial age are too prominent to be either ignored or dismissed as coincidental'.[59] In addition to the Christian works discussed above, a very intriguing second-century pagan passage is relevant to our discussion of the Eucharist. It is well known that the Eucharist and other Christian meals caught the attention of pagan contemporaries: a number of pagan texts refer to human sacrifice and incestuous couplings that supposedly took place during these meals.[60] This slander shows that outsiders were intrigued by what they regarded as the unusual character of Christian meals.[61] It is thus unsurprising that Achilles Tatius' novel *Leucippe and Clitophon* almost certainly includes a parody of the Eucharist. The author, who probably lived in southwestern Asia Minor and wrote in the 160/170s,[62] has the god Dionysos say the following about a cup of friendship with wine:

> And Dionysos said: '*This is* water of harvest, *this is* blood of a grape'. The god led the herdsman to the vine and, *after taking* from the clusters and *at the same time crushing* (*them*) *and showing* the vine, he said, '*This is* the water; *that is* the spring'. In this way, therefore, wine came to be among humans, so goes the story of the Tyrians. They continue to observe that day as a feast to that god.[63]

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59 G. Bowersock, *Fiction as History* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 1994), 124 f.

60 Cf. A.B. McGowan, 'Eating People: Accusations of Cannibalism Against Christians in the Second Century', *JECS* 2 (1994), 413–432; L. Roig Lanzillotta, 'The Early Christians and Human Sacrifice', in J.N. Bremmer (ed.), *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice* (Leuven 2007), 81–102; N. Belayche, 'La polémique pagano-chrétienne autour du repas rituel (II^{e}–IV^{e} siècle): un conflit d'«identités»', in N. Bériou et al. (eds), *Pratiques de l'eucharistie dans les églises d'Orient et d'Occident*, 2 vols (Paris 2009), 1.521–537; J.N. Bremmer, 'Early Christian Human Sacrifice between Fact and Fiction', in F. Prescendi and A. Nagy (eds), *Sacrifices humains: discours et réalité* (Turnhout 2013), 165–176 (with more bibliography).

61 Scholars who stress similarities between early Jesus groups and pagan associations do not take this aspect sufficiently into account.

62 Cf. J.N. Bremmer, 'The Novel and the Apocryphal Acts: Place, Time and Readership', in H. Hofmann and M. Zimmerman (eds), *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel* IX (Groningen 1998), 157–180 at 167–168 (place); A. Henrichs, 'Missing Pages: Papyrology, Genre, and the Greek Novel', in D. Obbink and R. Rutherford (eds), *Culture in Pieces. Essays on Ancient Texts in Honour of Peter Parsons* (Oxford 2011), 302–322 at 306–309 (time).

63 Achilles Tatius 2.2.5–2.3.1: καὶ ὁ Διόνυσος ἔφη· *'Τοῦτό ἐστιν ὀπώρας ὕδωρ, τοῦτό ἐστιν αἷμα βότρυος'*. ἄγει πρὸς τὴν ἄμπελον ὁ θεὸς τὸν βουκόλον, καὶ τῶν βοτρύων *λαβὼν ἅμα καὶ θλίβων*

This 'institution narrative' has a number of similarities to the institution narrative in the Gospels, as has repeatedly been observed. The most recent analysis by Courtney Friesen persuasively notes the following similarities: 1) τοῦτό ἐστιν is repeated; 2) wine is associated with blood; 3) Dionysos' actions (taking, crushing, and showing) resemble those of Jesus at the Last Supper; 4) Dionysos' 'cup of friendship' resembles 'my blood of the covenant'; and 5) in both cases the actions involve ritual commemoration.[64]

A second probable example of pagan knowledge of the Eucharist is found in Apuleius' novel *Metamorphoses*. We do not know where or how Apuleius learned about the Eucharist. It was probably in the western part of the Roman Empire, where he spent most of his life and wrote his novel in the 170s or 180s—the time when the earlier Apocryphal Acts were composed.[65] In the ninth book of *Metamorphoses*, the narrator Lucius, who has been turned into an ass, describes the wife of his current owner, a baker, as the worst and most depraved woman in the world. What interests us is the statement that she:

> scorned and spurned all the gods in heaven, and, instead of holding a definite religion, she used the false sacrilegious presumption of a god, whom she would call "one and only", to invent meaningless rites to cheat everyone and deceive her wretched husband, having sold her body to drink from dawn and to debauchery the whole day.[66]

While the reference to the *unicus deus* could allude to either Judaism or Christianity, the mention of wine and sex clearly points to Christianity, since these elements were standard elements of ancient accusations against Christians.[67]

καὶ δεικνὺς τὴν ἄμπελον, *'Τοῦτο μέν ἐστιν'*, ἔφη, 'τὸ ὕδωρ, *τοῦτο δὲ ἡ πηγή'*. ὁ μὲν οὖν οἶνος οὕτως ἐς ἀνθρώπους παρῆλθεν, ὡς ὁ Τυρίων λόγος. Ἑορτὴν δὲ ἄγουσιν ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνῳ τῷ θεῷ.

64 C. Friesen, 'Dionysus as Jesus: The Incongruity of a Love Feast in Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* 2.2', *HTR* 107 (2014), 222–240, but see also Bowersock, *Fiction as History*, 125–132.

65 Regarding the date and place of composition of the *Metamorphoses*, see S.J. Harrison, *Apuleius. A Latin Sophist* (Oxford 2000), 9 f.

66 Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 9.14: *Tunc, spretis atque calcatis divinis numinibus, in vicem certae religionis mentita sacrilega praesumptione dei, quem praedicaret unicum, confictis observationibus vacuis fallens omnes homines et miserum maritum decipiens matutino mero et continuo stupro corpus manciparat*, tr. J.A. Hanson, LCL, slightly adapted.

67 See especially D. Tripp, 'The Baker's Wife and her Confidante in Apuleius, Met. IX 14 ff.: some liturgiological considerations', *Emerita* 56 (1988), 245–254; V. Schmidt, 'Reaktionen auf das Christentum in den *Metamorphosen* des Apuleius', *VC* 51 (1997), 51–71 and 'Is there an Allusion to the Christian Eucharist in Apuleius, *Met.* 9, 14–15?', *Latomus* 62 (2003), 864–874; Harrison, *Apuleius*, 249 n. 175; I. Ramelli, 'Apuleius and Christianity: The Novelist-

The narrator donkey also tells us another detail about the baker's wife:

> But an old woman who was a confidante of her debaucheries, and acted as a go-between in her affairs, was her inseparable companion all day every day. With her, first thing in the morning after breakfast and then some preliminary exchanges of strong wine, she would construct deceptive charades with cunning twists for the downfall of her poor, wretched husband.[68]

Apuleius obviously exaggerates the bad qualities of the baker's wife, such as the incessant nature of the drinking and debauchery and the use of *merum*, 'undiluted wine' instead of normal diluted wine. Yet it is striking that he twice stresses that she drinks wine early in the morning—as early Christians regularly did (see below: § 6.2). Another interesting detail is the presence of the old woman. Old women were often associated with drunkenness in antiquity,[69] but the presence of old women in Christian communities is also attested very early, and pagan observers must have found this a striking feature of Christian communities.[70] While this passage is certainly not as interesting for our purposes as the one from Achilles Tatius, it still seems to betray some knowledge of the Eucharist, and it locates this in the morning.

6 From Symposium to Christian Banquet?

Having completed our survey, I will now take a closer look at some aspects of the early traditions concerning the Eucharist.

Philosopher in Front of a New Religion', in M.P. Futre Pinheiro et al. (eds), *Intende, Lector-Echoes of Myth, Religion and Ritual in the Ancient Novel* (Berlin/Boston 2011), 145–173 at 150–156; K. Dowden, 'Apulée et le culte', in C. Bost-Pouderon and B. Pouderon (eds), *Les hommes et les dieux dans l'ancien roman* (Lyon 2012), 213–224 at 220.

68 Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 9.15: *Sed anus quaedam stuprorum sequestra et adulterorum internuntia de die cotidie inseparabilis aderat. Cum qua protinus ientaculo ac dehinc vino mero mutuis vicibus velitata, scaenas fraudulentas in exitium miserrimi mariti subdolis ambagibus construebat*, tr. Hanson, LCL.

69 P. Zanker, *Die trunkene Alte* (Frankfurt 1989); J. Masséglia, 'Reasons to be Cheerful? The Drunken Old Woman of Munich and Rome', in A. Chianotis (ed.), *Unveiling Emotions: Sources and Methods for the Study of Emotions in the Greek World* (Stuttgart 2012), 413–440.

70 Cf. *Acts of John* 30; Lucian, *Peregrinus* 12; Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs*, 40–41, 104–109.

1. Gerard Rouwhorst has recently distinguished two major chains of tradition of the Eucharist, one having its origins in the Eastern part of the Mediterranean area (Syria; Mesopotamia) and one in the Western, Latin-speaking part (North Africa; Rome; Italy). In the latter tradition, the offering of the gifts by the faithful at the beginning of the eucharistic prayer played a prominent role, while it was unknown in the Eastern tradition. In the East, the major culminating point of the eucharistic celebration was an invocation of the Holy Spirit, an element which was lacking in the Western tradition.[71] In his discussion he does not mention Asia Minor. Yet our survey so far has shown that this area deserves a place in this picture, even though it conforms neither to the East nor to the West. Like the West, it lacks the so-called *Geistepiklese* but, like some areas in the East, such as Syria, as the *Acts of Thomas* testifies,[72] it knows of Eucharists with only water. It seems therefore to occupy a kind of middle position between East and West.

2. We have found two types of religious meals in our texts: the Eucharist and the *agapê*. It is noteworthy that Ignatius, who probably worked only slightly earlier than the authors of the Apocryphal Acts, also differentiates between the Eucharist and the *agapê* (*Ad Smyrnaeos* 8).[73] In fact, distinctions between these events begin to be made at more or less the same time that the term εὐχαριστία starts to be used in various places in the Christian world, as is illustrated by Ignatius (*Ad Philadelphos* 4, *Ad Smyrnaeos* 7–8), Justin (*Apologia* 1.66.1) and the *Acts of John* (§ 1).

In the Apocryphal Acts, the term *agapê* only occurs in the *Acts of John* (§ 1) and in the *Acts of Paul* (§ 4). Unfortunately, we do not learn what is eaten at the latter meals, or whether they involve the Eucharist. At any rate, it seems certain that they were celebrated at night, as we have seen. We know more about practices in Carthage, where Tertullian provides our best information about the *agapê*, albeit around 200. From him we also hear that it is a meal celebrated in the evening:

> Our dinner shows its purpose by its name: it is called what among the Greeks means affection (*dilectio*) (…) We do not recline until we have

71 G. Rouwhorst, 'Frühchristliche Eucharistiefeiern Die Entwicklung östlicher und westlicher Traditionsstränge', in Hellholm and Sänger, *The Eucharist*, 2.771–786 at 771 (quotation).

72 G. Rouwhorst, 'La célébration de l'eucharistie selon les Actes de Thomas', in Ch. Caspers and M. Schneiders (eds), *Omnnes Circumstantes* (Kampen 1990), 51–77.

73 For the best survey, see J. Schlosser, 'Les agapes et l'identité chrétienne', *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 93 (2013), 157–170.

> first tasted of prayer to God. So much is eaten as satisfies hunger; as much drunk as is fitting for the pure. Appetite is satisfied to the extent appropriate for those who are mindful that they have to worship God even at night; speech, as for those who know the Master is listening. After washing of hands, and lights, each is invited into the middle to sing to God as able, from knowledge of sacred writings or from their own mind; thus it can be tested how much has been drunk. Prayer again closes the feast.[74]
>
> *Apologeticum* 39.16–18, tr. MCGOWAN

Tertullian clearly wants to stress that it is a sober meal and not a sumptuous banquet. It is also fully lit by candles and is not held in darkness, as lurid pagan slander imagined (§ 6.6). Finally, there is no mention of the Eucharist. In his time, then, the two seem to have been two separate occasions.

Tertullian's defensive tone may have been justified, as Clement of Alexandria clearly observed (or heard about) a rather different kind of celebration:

> Some, speaking with unbridled tongue, dare to apply the name *agapê* to pitiful suppers redolent of savour and sauces. Dishonouring the good and saving work of the Word, [the] consecrated love [*agapê*], with pots and pouring of sauce; and by drink and delicacies and smoke desecrating that name, they are deceived in their idea, having expected that the promise of God might be bought with suppers.[75]
>
> *Paedagogus* 2.1.4.3–4, tr. MCGOWAN

Clement evidently objects to celebrations of the *agapê* that are conducted in a manner unworthy of the Christian lifestyle, not to the *agapê* itself.

The importance of the *agapê* is confirmed by the contemporaneous *Passion of Perpetua*, which reports about Christian martyrs who were executed on 7 March 203:

> Even on the penultimate day they directed remarks to the crowd with the same steadfastness (viz. as Perpetua: 16.1), when they had that last dinner

74 On the passage, see A.B. McGowan, 'Rethinking Agape and Eucharist in Early North African Christianity', *Studia Liturgica* 34 (2004), 165–176; P. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins* (Oxford 2004), 96–103; T. Georges, 'Das Gemeindemahl bei Tertullian in Apologeticum 39—eine nichtsakramentale Agapefeier?', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 16 (2012), 279–291.

75 See also A.B. McGowan, 'Naming the Feast: the *agape* and the diversity of early Christian meals', *SP* 30 (1997), 314–318.

> that is called 'the free dinner' (as far as they were concerned they did not celebrate the 'free dinner' but the *agapê*): threatening them with God's judgment, stressing the successful outcome of their martyrdom and ridiculing the curiosity of the onlookers.[76]

The martyrs thus celebrate their penultimate day with a special meal, the so-called *cena libera*, which the editor of the *Passion* contrasts with the simplicity of the *agapê* (or *dilectio*,[77] as Tertullian translates it), a simplicity that Tertullian also stresses when discussing the more licentious tendencies of pagan meals (*Apologeticum* 39.16). The *Passion* does not mention the time at which this dinner occurs, but it seems reasonable to suppose that it takes place in the evening, since it is the martyrs' last full meal before they are executed the next morning at dawn (18). McGowan argues that this meal is the main congregational meal and includes a celebration of the Eucharist, but, if this is true, Tertullian is remarkably silent about that aspect. Moreover, the *Acts of John* differentiates between the Eucharist and the *agapê*, as does Ignatius, as we have seen.

Although McGowan sees the *agapê* (with Eucharist) as the primary meal of the Carthaginian congregation at the turn of the third century, he also notes that the Eucharist was sometimes (regularly?) distributed to Christians in Carthage early in the morning. Thus Tertullian says:

> We take also, in congregations before daybreak, and from the hand of none but the presidents, the sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Lord both commanded to be eaten at meal-times, and enjoined to be taken by all alike.[78]

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76 *Passio Perpetuae* 17.1: *Pridie quoque cum illam cenam ultimam quam liberam vocant, quantum in ipsis erat, non cenam liberam sed agapem cenarent, eadem constantia ad populum verba iactabant, comminantes iudicium Dei, contestantes passionis suae felicitatem, inridentes concurrentium curiositatem*. I quote the new translation by J. Farrell and C. Williams in J.N. Bremmer and M. Formisano (eds), *Perpetua's Passions* (Oxford 2012), 24–32.

77 Regarding the custom at the time of Perpetua, see Tertullian, *Ad martyras* 2, *De oratione* 28, *De baptismo* 9.4, *De ieiuniis* 17; E. Dekkers, *Tertullianus en de geschiedenis der liturgie* (Brussels and Amsterdam 1947), 48; H. Pétré, *Caritas* (Leuven 1948), 64–65; W.-D. Hauschild, 'Agapen 1', in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 1 (Berlin/New York 1977), 748–753; see also the mention in the *Passio SS. Mariani et Iacobi* (the time of Decius or somewhat later), 11.5.

78 Tertullian, *De corona militis* 3.3, tr. McGowan: *Eucharistiae sacramentum, et in tempore uictus et omnibus mandatum a Domino, etiam antelucanis coetibus nec de aliorum manu quam praesidentium sumimus*.

McGowan argues that this was not a proper Eucharist, however, but a sort of communion service at which Christians received eucharistic elements that had been consecrated earlier at an *agapê*.[79] McGowan does not provide any evidence for this idea, and the evidence from Cyprian flatly contradicts him,[80] as do the Apocryphal Acts, which he does not take into account. As we have seen, in the *Acts of John*, John, Andronicus, and the brothers go to Drusiana's sepulchre 'so we might break the bread there', without any mention of a prior consecration. The text specifies that this happens 'at dawn' (72: ἐξ ἑωθινῆς). Of course, various complications at the grave delay the actual distribution of the bread, but the time of day when the party was *intending* to partake is clear.

I conclude therefore that in the later second century the Eucharist was probably performed both at morning and evening assemblies,[81] not only on Sundays, whereas the *agapê* was celebrated only in the evening, is never mentioned as being celebrated on Sundays and is never connected with the Eucharist or the breaking of bread. In fact, the practice of separating the Eucharist from the *agapê* could have early origins, since Pliny (*Ep.* 10.96.7) mentions a meeting in the morning with prayers and an 'innocent' meal in the evening. The term 'innocent' suggests that different food was consumed in the morning and the evening, thus making the idea of a morning Eucharist in early second-century Bithynia entirely plausible.[82]

Furthermore, flexible eucharistic practices are suggested by several passages in our Acts. The Eucharist that takes place shortly before John's death in the *Acts of John*, the one that occurs after the healing of Gratinus and his parents in the *Acts of Andrew*, the one after the death of Ptolemaeus in the *Acts of Peter*, and the Eucharist on Paul's arrival in Iconium and at the conclusion of the fast in Corinth in the *Acts of Paul* all suggest that the Eucharist could be performed separately from the morning or evening service, and that it was recognized as a ritual in its own right by early Christian communities. A special case seems to have been the Eucharist after baptism. We have two examples of this practice in our texts: after the conversion of captain Theon in the *Acts of Peter*, and the conversion of Artemilla in the *Acts of Paul*. A similar order

79 McGowan, 'Rethinking Agape and Eucharist', 179 f.

80 Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.15.1 and 16.2, with G.W. Clarke ad loc.

81 In Tertullian's and Cyprian's time, the Eucharist is celebrated in Carthage in the morning, cf. Tertullian, *De corona militis* 3.3; [Novatianus], *De spectaculis* 5.5; Cyprian, *Ep.* 63.15.2 with G.W. Clarke ad loc.

82 For Pliny and the Eucharist, see J.G. Cook, 'Reactions to the Eucharist in Paganism', in Hellholm and Sänger, *The Eucharist*, 3.1685–1714 at 1687–1693.

of events is attested in other early Christian texts, and this seems to have been the rule in that period.[83]

3. What does the eucharistic ritual consist of in our Apocryphal Acts? They contain only scattered remarks, but the first scene from the *Acts of John* discussed above mentions 'a prayer, the Eucharist and the laying on of hands on each person'. At the Eucharist in the *Acts of John*, both glorification and thanksgiving are mentioned. These elements seem to have been part of the standard ritual at the time, since Justin Martyr also says that before the bread and wine are consumed, the president of the brothers 'gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe (…) and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands' (*Apologia* 1.65, tr. McGowan). The *Acts of Andrew* and those of Peter clearly mention thanksgiving in connection with the Eucharist, and the latter also refer to glorifying God. This suggests that a combination of glorifying and thanking God was widespread, even if we cannot reconstruct the exact scenario of the Eucharist in our texts.[84]

In these Acts, it is always the apostle who breaks and distributes the bread, but it seems safe to understand him as a fictional representation of the bishop or cleric who would normally have performed that role. Justin (*Apologia* 1.65), too, assigns the task of breaking the bread to 'the president' of the congregation. This seems to have been an old tradition, as Paul also breaks the bread in Troas in the canonical Acts (20:11: κλάσας τὸν ἄρτον καὶ γευσάμενος). Yet in the earlier second century the question of who would distribute the Eucharist seems to have been a matter of debate in some places. Otherwise, it is hard to understand why Ignatius (*Ad Smyrnaeos* 8) would have stressed the role of the bishop at the Eucharist to the degree that he does.

4. What about the elements? In an instructive study of the Jewish and Greco-Roman background of the Eucharist, Gerard Rouwhorst argues that the importance given to the breaking of the bread 'appears to be unparalleled in Greco-

83 *Didache* 7 and 9; Justin, *Apologia* 1.65.1; Cyprian, *Epistula* 63.8; Hippolytus, *Traditio apostolica* 22; H.-U. Weidemann, 'Taufe und Taufeucharistie. Die postbaptismale Mahlgemeinschaft in Quellen des 2. und 3. Jahrhunderts', in D. Hellholm et al. (eds), *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism. Waschungen, Initiation und Taufe. Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity. Spätantike, Frühes Judentum und Frühes Christentum*, 3 vols (Berlin/New York 2011), 3.1483–1530. For baptism and Eucharist in the *Passion of Perpetua*, see Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs*, 372–373; in the Pseudo-Clementines, baptism is a precondition for partaking of the Eucharist: *Homiliae* 1.22, 13.4 and *Recognitiones* 1.19, 7.29.

84 This is also noted in an interesting analysis of the Eucharist from the point of view of modern ritual theories by L. Bormann, 'Das Abendmahl. Kulturanthropologische, kognitionswissenschaftliche und ritualwissenschaftliche Perspektiven', in Hellholm and Sänger, *The Eucharist*, 1.697–732 at 713–719.

Roman and Jewish sources. In the Jewish tradition, the emphasis lies on the blessing accompanying the breaking of the bread rather than on the breaking itself. In early Christianity, this ritual gesture gained an intensity it had never had in Jewish or non-Jewish symposiums'.[85] This is basically correct, and can even be supplemented somewhat.

We have seen that our texts never mention an act of blessing, only glorifying and thanking. In this respect, early Christians had significantly changed the Jewish ritual they inherited. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, I would like to stress that a collocation of 'breaking' and 'bread' (*frango* + *panem*) only occurs once in Latin before the advent of Christianity,[86] and never in Greek before the Septuagint. It appears in the latter in Judges (19:5; κλάσματι ἄρτου), Jeremiah (16:7; κλασθῇ ἄρτος) and Ezekiel (13:19; κλασμάτων ἄρτου), as well as the early Jewish *Apocryphon of Ezekiel* (fr. a: τὸ κλάσμα τοῦ ἄρτου),[87] but in all of these cases, we only hear about a piece of bread, not about the ritual act of breaking it.

Beyond the New Testament, breaking of bread is also mentioned in the second century in the *Didache* (14.1: κλάσατε ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσατε), the *Acts of John*,[88] the *Acts of Andrew* (*AALat* 5: *fregit panem*), and the *Acts of Paul* (5: κλάσις ἄρτου), after which point the collocation becomes increasingly common. It follows, then, that 'breaking of bread' derives from Christianity's Jewish ancestry, but had acquired a symbolic meaning which its Jewish ancestry lacked.[89] It also seems clear from our evidence that the bread was much more important than the accompanying water or wine, which our *Acts* typically do not mention. The bread had been important at the Jewish meal, and retained this

85 G. Rouwhorst, 'The Roots of the Early Christian Eucharist: Jewish Blessings or Hellenistic Symposia?', in A. Gerhards and C. Leonhard (eds), *Jewish and Christian Liturgy and Worship. New Insights into its History and Interaction* (Leiden 2007) 295–308 at 308.

86 Plautus, *Poenulus* 729; Curtius 4.2.14; Juvenal 5.68, 10.200. *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae s.v. frango* provides many Christian examples.

87 Mladen Popović (personal communication) also refers me to the Aramaic 2Q24 (New Jerusalem), fr. 4 line 10, where the collocation 'distributing' + 'bread' seems to appear. Unfortunately, 'bread' is a conjecture, but it is plausible, since (loaves of) bread are mentioned both before and after this line. The distribution implies that the bread has been broken.

88 *AJ* 72: ἄρτον κλάσωμεν, 85: ἄρτον … κλάσαι, 110: κλάσας τὸν ἄρτον.

89 K. Hruby, 'Le geste de la fraction du pain ou les gestes eucharistiques dans la tradition juive', in A.M. Triacca and A. Pistoia (eds), *Gestes et paroles dans les diverses familles liturgiques* (Rome 1978), 123–133; C. Leonhard, 'Brotbrechen als Ritualelement formeller Mähler bei den Rabbinen und in der Alten Kirche', in C. Cordoni and G. Langer (eds), *'Let the Wise Listen and add to Their Learning' (Prov 1:5) Festschrift for Günter Stemberger on the Occasion of his 75th Birthday* (Berlin and Boston 2016), 501–519.

importance in Christian circles, even as the context changed. In fact, it was so important that the bread itself could be called 'Eucharist'.[90]

5. Meals are social events and not just a matter of filling the stomach. The eucharistic ritual not only fortifies and unites members of the congregation, but also separates the sheep from the goats and helps to maintain the boundaries of a Christian congregation.[91] While the *Didache* already restricts the Eucharist to people who have been baptized and indirectly refers to it as 'holy' (9.5: §1),[92] it is called 'most holy' in the *Acts of John*. In the stories of Rufina and Theon in the *Acts of Peter*, baptism is not the only pre-condition: purity of behaviour is also required for those who would receive the Eucharist. This must have been a fairly early development, since a similar story seems to have been part of the original *Acts of John*—if *Papyrus Oxyrhynchus* VI.850 derives from the original version. This fragmentary papyrus probably recounts how a secret sin of a newly converted Christian, Zeuxis, is revealed at the moment of the Eucharist (which is preceded by a prayer of thanksgiving).[93] Similarly, in the *Acts of Thomas* (51–54) the hands of a young man who has murdered a girl wither when he approaches the Eucharist. Apparently, as the Eucharist began to be celebrated separately from a normal meal, it grew in significance and 'holiness'. If we follow Mary Douglas, who observes that meal practice and community formation are often connected and that communities with well-defined identities tend to have more developed meal practices, we might associate these developments in the practice of the Eucharist with a more pronounced drawing of boundaries between the Christian community and their Jewish and pagan contemporaries over time.[94]

6. The emphasis on holiness did not take the form of a connection with the Last Supper. The total absence of an institution narrative in the Apocryphal Acts is striking, although the reciting of such narratives during the Eucharist actually did not become prevalent until the third century at the earliest.[95] Ignatius alludes to an institution narrative (*Ad Romanos* 7.3, *Ad Smyrnaeos* 7.1) and one is also known to Justin (*Apologia* 1.66.2–3; *Dialogus* 41.1, 70.3–4), but

90 Origen, *Contra Celsum* 8.57: "Εστι δὲ καὶ σύμβολον ἡμῖν τῆς πρὸς θεὸν εὐχαριστίας ἄρτος 'εὐχαριστία' καλούμενος.

91 This is also observed by L. Westra, 'Hoe functioneerde de tafelgemeenschap in de Vroege Kerk?', *Kerk en Theologie* 68 (2017), 109–122.

92 McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists*, 178; H. van de Sandt, 'Why does the Didache Conceive of the Eucharist as a Holy Meal?', *VC* 65 (2011), 1–20.

93 Cf. Junod and Kaestli, *Acta Iohannis*, 1.109–125.

94 M. Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (London 1996²) 69–87.

95 G. Rouwhorst, 'Faire mémoire par un geste: la fraction du pain', in A. Lossky and M. Sodi (eds), *"Faire mémoire": l'anamnèse dans la liturgie* (Vatican City 2011), 75–86 at 77 f.

there is no clear evidence in either case that the relevant words were actually pronounced during their services. It is interesting that Achilles Tatius was also acquainted with an institution narrative. Since nothing in his novel suggests that he was a reader of the Gospels, this may suggest that he was familiar with the actual practice(s?) of proto-orthodox congregations.

An institution narrative is not mentioned by the *Didache*, which is probably the first writing to mention the Eucharist outside the books of the New Testament,[96] nor in Gnostic writings.[97] I would therefore conclude that an institution narrative was not yet part of the actual ritual in all congregations in the second century, and only gradually became a fixed part after the Gospels and the letters of Paul had acquired authority in the later second century.[98] In fact, there is no certain mention of an institution narrative being recited during the Eucharist before Cyprian (*Epistula* 63.17.1–2). In any case, the variation in the liquid used—wine, water, or neither—is a good illustration of the pluriformity of the early Church, not only in doctrine but also in practice.[99]

7. Finally, to what extent do the Eucharist and the *agapê* represent a transformation of pre-existing pagan practices? While the origins of the *agapê* have rarely been analysed in detail, studies of the origins of the Eucharist often reveal a clear agenda: to show that it is either Jewish, or Hellenistic Jewish, or Greco-Roman in origin. Gerard Rouwhorst rightly argues that we do not know enough about Jewish prayers and practices at the time of the *Didache* to draw firm conclusions about what was typically Jewish or typically Christian in that era.[100] Furthermore, the available evidence is geographically unbalanced. For

96 See also H.J. de Jonge, 'The Community Supper according to Paul and the *Didache*: Their Affinity and Historical Development', in J. Krans et al. (eds), *Paul, John, and Apocalyptic Eschatology. Studies in Honour of Martinus C. de Boer* (Leiden 2013), 30–47 at 39–43.

97 E. Thomassen, 'Going to Church with the Valentinians', in A.D. DeConick et al. (eds), *Practicing Gnosis: Ritual, Magic, Theurgy and Liturgy in Nag Hammadi, Manichaean and Other Ancient Literature. Essays in Honor of Birger A. Pearson* (Leiden 2013), 183–197.

98 The narrative also seems to have been lacking in the celebration with which the author of the *Gospel of Judas* was familiar, cf. G. Rouwhorst, 'The *Gospel of Judas* and Early Christian Eucharist', in J.A. van den Berg et al. (eds), *In Search of Truth. Augustine, Manichaeism and Other Gnosticism: Studies for Johannes van Oort at Sixty* (Leiden 2010), 611–625, overlooked by I. Dunderberg, 'The Eucharist in the Gospels of John, Philip, and Judas', *Early Christianity* 7 (2016), 484–507.

99 On diversity of Eucharistic practice, see most recently J. Schröter, *Das Abendmahl: Frühchristliche Deutungen und Impulse für die Gegenwart* (Stuttgart 2006); H. Taussig, *In the Beginning was the Meal* (Minneapolis 2009); A.B. McGowan, 'Rethinking Eucharistic Origins', *Pacifica* 23 (2010), 173–191; D.E. Smith and H. Taussig (eds), *Meals in the Early Christian World* (New York 2012). For the diversity of the early Church, see now H. Leppin, *Die frühen Christen von den Anfängen bis Konstantin* (Munich 2018).

100 G. Rouwhorst, 'Didache 9–10: A Litmus Test for the Research on Early Christian Liturgy

the second half of the second century, it mainly comes from Asia Minor. It then shifts to North Africa for the period from Tertullian to Cyprian, and to Syria with the *Acts of Thomas*. Nevertheless, we can conclude that the Christian ritual must have originated in a Jewish environment that was already heavily influenced by Greek culture, and that it continued to develop in a Greco-Roman one. It seems to me that both Jewish and Greco-Roman traditions contributed to the development of the Christian ritual.

This cannot be said for the origins of the terms *agapê* and *eucharistia*, however. In the Septuagint, the word *agapê* does not appear in the Pentateuch; most instances are in texts that were translated fairly late: the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes. As a designation for a love feast, the term first appears in the New Testament book of Jude (12)—this usage is thus clearly a Christian innovation.[101] Regarding the Eucharist, we have seen that the ritual of breaking bread has Jewish origins and was already characteristic of meetings of the earliest Jesus followers (as evident in 1 Cor),[102] although no clear differentiation seems to have been made between the Eucharist and a (love-)meal in the early period. Use of the term *eucharistia* for a ritual meal is another clear Christian innovation, however, reflecting the fact that 'giving thanks' had replaced the Jewish blessing of the bread.[103]

It is much harder to trace the process by which the meals themselves became Christianized. Contemporary research has emphasized close connections between associations and early Jesus groups.[104] As far as I can tell, little distinc-

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Eucharist', in H. van de Sandt (ed.), *Matthew and the Didache* (Assen and Minneapolis 2005), 143–156 and 'The Roots of the Early Christian Eucharist: Jewish Blessings or Hellenistic Symposia?' (see n. 85). See also his latest reflections in his valedictory lecture: *Nieuwe perspectieven op de liturgische tradities van het vroege Christendom* (Tilburg 2017), 26–30. German translation: 'Neue Sichtweisen auf die liturgischen Traditionen des frühen Christentums', *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 67 (2017), 209–236.

101 M. Wieger, 'Théologie et langage: le cas du mot agapē, "amour" ', *Positions Luthériennes* 63 (2015), 259–282 (with thanks to Jan Joosten).

102 1 Cor 10:16; Luke 24:30, 35; Acts 2:42, 46 and 20:7, 11; *Didache* 14.1.

103 For the Greek terminology, see J. and K. Blomqvist, 'Eucharist Terminology in Early Christian Literature. Philological and Semantic Aspects', in Hellholm and Sänger, *The Eucharist*, 1.389–421.

104 For recent surveys, see R. Ascough, 'Paul, Synagogues, and Associations: Reframing the Question of Models for Pauline Christ Groups', *Journal of the Jesus Movement in its Jewish Setting* 2 (2015), 27–52 and 'What Are They Now Saying about Christ Groups and Associations?', *Currents in Biblical Research* 13 (2015), 207–244; J.S. Kloppenborg, *Christ's Associations. Connecting and Belonging in the Ancient City* (New Haven and London, 2019); see also H.J. de Jonge, 'The Early History of the Lord's Supper', in J.W. van Henten and A. Houtepen (eds), *Religious Identity and the Invention of Tradition* (Assen 2001), 209–237.

tion has been made between emic and etic views in that debate. *We* might think of these groups as associations, *thiasoi* or *collegia*, but *early Christians themselves* do not seem to have used that terminology before Tertullian.[105] Jesus groups certainly resembled ancient associations in some respects,[106] but the pluriformity of both Jesus groups and associations—which had a variety of meal practices—cautions against drawing parallels too quickly, especially when there is so little evidence on the Christian side.[107]

There are also evident differences between the normal meal practices of Greco-Roman associations and Jesus groups.[108] First, there is no evidence of associations that met as frequently as the early Jesus groups, on both mornings and evenings. Second, early Christians seem to have preferred a more sober meal than their pagan contemporaries. Simple bread and water, as in the Eucharist, was hardly the fare preferred by ancient associations.[109] Third, although early Christians sometimes had patrons for meals, like their pagan contemporaries, these persons may have had less influence on the actual running of the Jesus groups, and their importance is sometimes minimized.[110] Fourth, there are no associations with the same spectrum of rich and poor, free and slave, male and female. Early Christianity was certainly unique in this respect. Fifth, whereas ancient associations usually sacrificed animals and used their meat for meals, early Christians called their Eucharist a 'sacrifice',[111] but

105 Cf. E.R. Urciuoli, '«Factio Christiana». Nouvel examen du rapport entre les premiers groupes de croyants en Christ et les associations volontaires antiques', *Apocrypha* 22 (2011), 253–264.

106 See M. Öhler, 'Mähler und Opferhandlungen in griechisch-römischen Vereinigungen. Das frühchristliche Herrenmahl im Kontext', in Hellholm and Sänger, *The Eucharist*, 3.1413–1440 (with bibliography).

107 For critiques of the connection between associations and the early Jesus groups, see Bremmer, *Maidens, Magic and Martyrs*, 15–16; B. Eckhardt, 'Who Thought That Early Christians Formed Associations?', *Mnemosyne* 71 (2018), 298–314.

108 As stressed by R. Ascough, 'Forms of Commensality in Greco-Roman Associations', *Classical World* 102 (2008), 33–46.

109 This has to be considered in the context of membership fees, cf. J.S. Kloppenborg, 'Epigraphy, Papyrology and the Interpretation of the New Testament: Member Contributions to the Eucharist', in T. Corsten et al. (eds), *Epigraphik und Neues Testament* (Tübingen 2016), 129–153; see also Ch.H. Cosgrave, 'Banquet Ceremonies Involving Wine in the Greco-Roman World and Early Christianity', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 79 (2017) 299–316.

110 R.F. Stoops, Jr., 'Patronage in the *Acts of Peter*', *Semeia* 38 (1986), 91–100 and 'Christ as Patron in the *Acts of Peter*', *Semeia* 56 (1992), 143–157; C.A. Bobertz, 'The Role of Patron in the *Cena Dominica* of Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition*', *Journal of Theological Studies* 44 (1993), 170–184.

111 *Acts of Peter* 2; *Acts of Paul* 12.4; A.B. McGowan, 'Eucharist and Sacrifice: Cultic Tradition and Transformation in Early Christian Ritual Meals', in M. Klinghardt and H. Taussig (eds),

did not actually slaughter animals. They seem to have wanted to appropriate the pagan *term* but not the practice. Was this linguistic usage an attempt to seem 'normal'? Sixth, by only admitting baptized persons to the Eucharist, early Christians used it to enact a distinction from the world around them.[112]

7 Conclusion

This study of the Apocryphal Acts has shown that we have evidence of Christian meal practices in the period between Justin and the Carthage of Tertullian and Cyprian. The Acts contain interesting descriptions of the Eucharist and the love-meal, in many cases showing that there was continuity between the second and third centuries. For pagan contemporaries, the Christian Eucharist and love-meal must have seemed strange: references to human sacrifice and incestuous couplings during these meals suggest that contemporaries were more struck by the differences between Christian meals and their own than the similarities. Although Christian identity in terms of ritual meals took several centuries to fully develop, Christians had already separated themselves from their Jewish ancestry and pagan contemporaries at an early stage.[113]

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112 This is argued persuasively in a balanced survey of differences between the Eucharist and meals of pagan associations by J. König, *Saints and Symposiasts. The Literature of Food and the Symposium in Greco-Roman and Early Christian Culture* (Cambridge 2012), 123–130.

113 I am most grateful to Gerard Rouwhorst and the editors for their comments and to Brian Heffernan and Julia Snyder for the careful correction of my English.

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CHAPTER 5

The Terminology of Mystery Cults in Cyril of Alexandria

Hans van Loon

What prompted me to investigate the use of the terminology of the mystery cults[1] by Cyril of Alexandria (c. 378–444) was a note by Georges Matthieu de Durand in his edition of Cyril's *Dialogues on the Trinity*.[2] Cyril writes: 'From then [the time of the incarnation] on, heaven, that is, the multitude of the holy angels, is mystagogically guided into the mystery concerning him [Christ] through the illumination of the Spirit'.[3] In this brief sentence the archbishop uses three words that also played a role in the mystery cults: (1) guided mystagogically (μυσταγωγεῖται); (2) mystery (μυστήριον); (3) illumination or—literally—torchbearing (δᾳδουχίας). Especially the last word, δᾳδουχίας, caused de Durand to write his note.

The torchbearer (δᾳδοῦχος) was one of the most important priests at the Eleusinian Mysteries,[4] and we also encounter an official with this title in other mystery cults.[5] De Durand asserts in his note that it was Cyril who introduced the term δᾳδουχία into Christian theology. This is not entirely true, as the word is also found in a theological sense in John Chrysostom (although it is not quite

1 Whereas it was customary to speak of 'mystery religions' a hundred years ago, this title has been replaced by 'mystery cults' or simply 'mysteries', since it concerns not full-fledged religions, but rather restricted cults. See W. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge, MA/London 1987), 10–11. Burkert still gives a definition of 'mysteries' (on p. 11), but later scholars tend to regard the various mystery cults as belonging to a group with Wittgensteinian family resemblances. J.N. Bremmer, *Initiation into the Mysteries of the Ancient World*, Münchner Vorlesungen zu Antiken Welten 1 (Berlin 2014), xii–xiii, gives a number of characteristics, and so does H. Bowden, *Mystery Cults of the Ancient World* (Princeton, NJ/Oxford 2010), 15.

2 G.M. de Durand (ed.), *Cyrille d'Alexandrie. Dialogues sur la Trinité*, vol. 3 (SC 246; Paris 1978), 258.

3 Cyril of Alexandria, *De sancta trinitate dialogi* VI, Aubert 626b, in SC 246, 128: διὰ τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος δᾳδουχίας μυσταγωγεῖται λοιπὸν τὸ ἐπ' αὐτῷ μυστήριον ὁ οὐρανός, τουτέστιν ἡ τῶν ἁγίων ἀγγέλων πληθύς. Tr.: my own.

4 K. Clinton, *The Sacred Officials of the Eleusinian Mysteries*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society NS 64/3 (Philadelphia, PA 1974), 67–68.

5 Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 75, 77, 128–129.

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clear what Chrysostom refers to by the word δᾳδουχία),[6] but in earlier church fathers the word rarely occurs (its cognates somewhat more often), and it tends to have the literal meaning of 'torchbearing' or 'torchlight'.[7] Moreover, the word occurs much more often in Cyril of Alexandria than in any other church father, both before and after him.[8] So, de Durand seems to have a point.

This French scholar notes that Cyril attributes a different meaning to δᾳδουχία—illumination by the Spirit—, and he posits that this is part of a larger policy to incorporate the terminology of the mystery cults into the Christian vocabulary.[9] De Durand does not consider the word μυστήριον itself, because it already belonged to a long tradition within Christianity, but he mentions three terms besides δᾳδουχία: μυσταγωγία (mystagogy), ἱεροφάντης (hierophant, the most important priest at the Eleusinian Mysteries), and ἐποπτεία (which indicates the highest degree of initiation in the Mysteries).

As far as I have been able to ascertain, de Durand has never tested his hypothesis. I have encountered two brief references to his note: one by Marie-Odile Boulnois, in her work on Cyril's understanding of the Trinity (1994),[10] and one by Matthew Crawford, in his book on revelation and exegesis in Cyril (2014),[11] but neither of them have elaborated on de Durand's hypothesis. In this article, I want to investigate therefore how Cyril of Alexandria uses the terminology of the mystery cults, what meaning he attributes to the terms, and whether we must conclude from this that there was in fact a deliberate policy to Christianize this vocabulary, as de Durand suggests.

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6 John Chrysostom, *Epistulae ad Olympiadem* 8.3.

7 Gregory of Nazianzus, *Contra Julianum imperatorem* 2 (*Oratio* 5), section 16; idem, *In novam Dominicam* (*Oratio* 44), section 5. See already 2 Macc 4:22.

8 Searches in the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG), a digital library of Greek literature, published by the University of California, Irvine: www.tlg.uci.edu, on 20 September 2016. The noun δᾳδουχία is found in Cyril of Alexandria (author = 4090) 23 times, and once in a sermon preached by him at the Council of Ephesus (author = 5000), in other church fathers four times or less. The noun δᾳδοῦχος does not occur in Cyril of Alexandria, and not more than twice in any of the other church fathers. And the verb δᾳδουχεῖν is found once in Cyril of Alexandria, seven times in Theodoret of Cyrus, five times in Gregory of Nazianzus, and three times or less in other church fathers. None of these three terms occur in authentic works of Origen or Athanasius.

9 De Durand, in SC 246, 258: 'Cela fait d'ailleurs partie d'une politique plus large de naturalisation du vocabulaire mystérique'.

10 M.-O. Boulnois, *Le paradoxe trinitaire chez Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Herméneutique, analyses philosophiques et argumentation théologique*, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 143 (Paris 1994), 435, n. 488.

11 M.R. Crawford, *Cyril of Alexandria's Trinitarian Theology of Scripture*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford 2014), 105–106, n. 161.

Originally, in the mystery cults, these terms were related to rituals, but when they reached Cyril they had undergone many developments. Within Greek culture and philosophy, they were at this point also being used in different contexts than the rituals of the mysteries. I will start with the meaning of the terms in the mystery cults, and with their metaphorical signification in the non-Christian Greek world. Many books and articles have been published during the last 150 years about the relationship between Christianity and the mystery cults, including their terminology. I will mention several of the main points of this ongoing discussion, and will subsequently return to Cyril of Alexandria: how does he employ these terms? Does he once more apply them to rituals—for example, to the sacraments—or have they acquired an altogether different meaning?

1 The Eleusinian Mysteries

To begin with, then, the meaning of the terms in their original context, the mystery cults. I will restrict myself to the Eleusinian Mysteries, the oldest and probably most influential mystery cult.[12] The cult at Eleusis existed from at least the seventh century BCE until the Goths destroyed the walls of the sanctuary in 395 CE, and although there will have been changes over time, the following will have applied most of the time.[13] The mysteries were devoted to Demeter, the goddess of agriculture and grain, and her daughter Persephone, who at Eleusis was usually referred to as Kore (Κόρη, the Maiden). The myth that is related to the cult can be found in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, written in the seventh or sixth century BCE.[14]

12 Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 2: 'what represents the mysteries proper for pagan antiquity, the cult of Eleusis'. Bremmer, *Initiation*, viii: the Greeks 'gave the name [μυστήρια] that had originally denoted only the Eleusinian Mysteries also to other cults in other places'.

13 See for more elaborate descriptions of the cult at Eleusis, Bremmer, *Initiation*, ch. 1, 1–20, and Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, ch. 1, 26–48. See also K. Clinton, 'The Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis', in N. Marinatos and R. Hägg (eds), *Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches* (London/New York 1993), 110–124; W. Burkert, *Homo Necans: Interpretationen altgriechischer Opferriten und Mythen* (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten; Berlin/New York 1972), 274–327; and G.E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton, NJ 1961), ch. 9, 224–285.

14 *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, in N.J. Richardson (ed.), *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford 1974), 95–135. Tr.: D.J. Rayor, *The Homeric Hymns: A Translation, with Introduction and Notes* (Berkeley 2014), 17–34. See for some qualifying remarks on the relationship between the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and the interpretation of the Eleusinian Mysteries: Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 46–47. K. Clinton, *Myth and Cult: The Iconography of the Eleusinian Myster-*

According to this myth, Persephone was kidnapped by Hades, the king of the underworld. Demeter then travelled across the whole earth in search for her daughter, with torches in her hands. She ended up in disguise at Eleusis, where she found shelter, but she was revealed as a goddess while making immortal a small child that she was nursing. She ordered the inhabitants to build a temple for her, and because Persephone was still lost she withheld her power from the fields, so that they withered. Then Zeus pleaded with Demeter to return to Mount Olympus and restore the fruitfulness of the earth. Demeter would only comply if she was reunited with Persephone, whereupon Zeus sent Hermes to fetch her daughter. Hades let her go, but he had given her pomegranate seed to eat, and as a result Persephone would have to stay one third of each year in the underworld. Demeter made the earth fruitful during the times that her daughter was with her. And she taught the leaders of the Eleusinians 'her mysteries (ὄργια)', 'sacred things not to be transgressed, asked about, or uttered'. And the poet adds: 'Blest are earth-bound mortals who have seen these rites'.[15] Although this blessing includes expectations of an afterlife,[16] the more recent scholarly view is that promises regarding life here on earth are more important.[17]

The Eleusinian Mysteries are loosely related to this myth: various ritual elements refer to different parts of the myth, but several characters and names that play a role in the Mysteries do not occur in the myth.[18] The Mysteries proper were the so-called Greater Mysteries, which were held at Eleusis in October of each year. Seven months before that, the Lesser Mysteries were celebrated

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ies: The Martin P. Nilsson Lectures on Greek Religion, Delivered 19–21 November 1990 at the Swedish Institute at Athens (Stockholm 1992), 96–99, goes much further by concluding that the *Hymn* was originally composed with a view to another festival, the Thesmophoria, and that the references to the Mysteries are a later addition. See also Clinton, 'The Sanctuary', 112–115.

15 *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 476–480, in Richardson, *Homeric Hymn*, 133–134: δρησμοσύνην θ' ἱερῶν καὶ ἐπέφραδεν ὄργια πᾶσι, σεμνά, τά γ' οὔ πως ἔστι παρεξ[ίμ]εν οὔ[τε] πυθέσθαι, οὔτ' ἀχέειν ... ὄλβιος ὃς τάδ' ὄπωπεν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων. Tr.: Rayor, *The Homeric Hymns*, 33.

16 The *Hymn* continues with: 'but the uninitiate, who has no share in them, never has the same lot when dead in misty darkness'; Richardson, *Homeric Hymn*, 134; Tr.: Rayor, *The Homeric Hymns*, 33.

17 Clinton, 'The Sanctuary', 120, regards the Mysteries as a transformation of the Thesmophoria and similar cults, with changed emphases, and with a rite 'which looks toward death and the afterlife'. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 21, states: 'The catchword is ... "blessedness", and it is taken to refer to the afterlife more than anything else'. Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 22–23, 47–48, however, questions the relationship between the Mysteries and the afterlife. And Bremmer, *Initiation*, 20, suggests that 'most Greeks may well have looked forward more to the promise of wealth in this life than to a good afterlife.'

18 Clinton, 'The Sanctuary', 112–115; idem, *Myth and Cult*, 96–99. See also Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 77.

at Agra(e) in Athens, but they were not a prerequisite for the Greater Mysteries.[19] The initiation consisted of two stages, the *myêsis* (μύησις) and the *epopteia* (ἐποπτεία), undergone in different—not necessarily consecutive—years; the corresponding initiates were called *mystês* (μύστης) and *epoptês* (ἐπόπτης).[20] Although it is not sure, *myêsis* may be etymologically related to the verb μύειν, which means 'to be closed' of the eyes (or lips), while the root of *epopteia* is connected with seeing. It is, therefore, possible that—during part of the time—the *mystai* and the *epoptai* were present at the same rituals, and that the *mystai* were blindfolded, while the *epoptai* could see what was going on. But moreover, the *epoptai* were probably granted a special vision after the *mystai* had left.[21]

The mysteries were also referred to as ὄργια (as we just saw in a quotation from the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*), and as τελεταί.[22] Ὄργια—which is used mostly in the plural—refers to all sorts of rites, including the secret rites of the mystery cults.[23] When applied to the mysteries, τελεταί occurs usually as a plural noun, and refers to a whole set of rituals. The word τελετή, however, is not reserved for the mysteries, but is also employed more generally to denote any kind of ritual.[24] The part of the sanctuary at Eleusis where the initiation took place was called the Telesterion (τελεστήριον), a hall which (in its final form) could hold 3,000 people. This hall contained a smaller room, called the Anaktoron (ἀνάκτορον),[25] in which the holy things were kept.

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19 Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 32, 44. Bremmer, *Initiation*, 3.

20 Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 44. Bremmer, *Initiation*, viii.

21 Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 44. Clinton, 'The Sanctuary', 118–119. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, fig. 3 on p. 56 (comment on pp. 94–95), contains a vase with a veiled initiand. In *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 182 and 197 (Richardson, *Homeric Hymn*, 110 and 111), Demeter is also said to be veiled (κατὰ κρῆθεν κεκαλυμμένη and προκατέσχετο χερσὶ καλύπτρην) when she is in Eleusis. Bremmer, *Initiation*, 9–10, divides the two forms of initiation over two nights. See also Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 274.

22 Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 9. Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 14–15.

23 F.L. Schuddeboom, *Greek Religious Terminology—Telete & Orgia: A Revised and Expanded English Edition of the Studies by Zijderveld and Van der Burg* (Leiden/Boston 2009), 183–185.

24 Schuddeboom, *Greek Religious Terminology*, 119–124. On pp. 103–118, he discusses the use of τελετή in Jewish and Christian authors; Cyril of Alexandria is not mentioned.

25 So Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 85–87 (as a *pars pro toto* ἀνάκτορον, esp. the plural ἀνάκτορα, could be used for the whole Telesterion). Clinton, *Myth and Cult*, Appendix 7, 'The Name of the Telesterion', 126–132, argues that Anaktoron referred to the whole Telesterion, not just to the smaller room, but C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Festival and Mysteries: Aspects of the Eleusinian Cult', in M.B. Cosmopoulos, *Greek Mysteries: The Archeology and Ritual of Ancient Greek Secret Cults* (London/New York 2003), 25–49, esp. p. 46, n. 14, defends Mylonas' view. Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 37, follows Clinton. Bremmer, *Initiation*, 9, follows Mylonas.

The most important priest at the Eleusinian Mysteries was the hierophant (ἱεροφάντης). He led the initiation rites at the sanctuary, and it was he who showed the holy things (τὰ ἱερά) to the *epoptai* (hence his name 'hierophant'),[26] also communicating holy words to them (τὰ λεγόμενα). When the initiands were gathered before the Anaktoron, and the hierophant emerged in the doorway, 'the Anactoron was lit by a brilliant light, and the appearance of the hierophant bathed in this light was a dramatic moment that was especially remembered'.[27] The dadouchos was the second most important priest, whose role Clinton describes as follows:

> He went with the hierophant and the sacred herald to make the *prorrhesis* at the Stoa Poecile [in Athens]. In the procession to Eleusis he marched perhaps at its head, next to the hierophant. During the secret rites his role can only be ascertained from his title: he provided light. The great importance of it at the climax of these rites is discussed above.[28]

It seems, then, that one of the most important tasks of the dadouchos was illumination in the literal sense of the word.[29] A mystagogue (μυσταγωγός) was someone who him- or herself was already an initiate and who accompanied the initiand. It will often have been a friend or an acquaintance. Part of the task of a mystagogue was to provide the initiand with the necessary information beforehand.[30]

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26 Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 273.

27 Clinton, *The Sacred Officials*, 46–47. Cf. Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 42. Clinton, 'The Sanctuary', 118.

28 Clinton, *The Sacred Officials*, 68. See also Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 232.

29 On the importance of light and fire, see also Chr. Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie bei Platon, Philon und Klemens von Alexandrien*, Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 26 (Berlin 1987), 47–52. If there was a fire burning in the smaller room, and the hierophant was the only one who was permitted to enter this room (Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 230), it cannot have been the dadouchos who lighted the fire, but only the hierophant (Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 50). If, however, there was a fire burning in the Telesterion, and the hierophant emerged from there while the initiands stood outside (Clinton, *Myth and Cult*, 130–131; see also p. 127 on the fragment from Aelian), the dadouchos could have lighted it. According to Clinton, 'The Sanctuary', 118, the light came from torches held by the *epoptai*, who were already in the Telesterion; quoted by Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 42. Bremmer, *Initiation*, 14, places the fire on the second night, which implies that only the *epoptai* could see it, not the *mystai*.

30 Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 237, 244, 248, 319. Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 32. Bremmer, *Initiation*, 3.

2 Interpretation and Metaphorical Understanding of the Mysteries

The interpretation of the mysteries and their terminology within Greek culture and philosophy underwent a development which had already begun long before the emergence of Christianity. Walter Burkert distinguishes three levels or 'stages', with stages in quotation marks, since they do not succeed each other, but the previous levels continue to exist beside the later ones. The intellectual interpretation of the rituals increases, while the relationship to the actual performance of the mysteries decreases.[31]

The first level is that of the myth, in which anthropomorphic terms are used to describe the god(dess).[32] The *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* obviously belongs to this stage. The second level is that of nature allegory, which Burkert links to pre-Socratic thought.[33] Applied to the Eleusinian Mysteries, the goddess Demeter is interpreted as Mother Earth, and Persephone as the grain, or as the life breath in the grain. It implies a hopeful message: just as in the myth, Persephone returns from the world of the dead, so the initiates will be blessed with the fruits of the earth (in this life). At the third level, the myths and the rituals of the mysteries are explained in such a way that their meaning fits within the framework of Platonic metaphysics, in which the material has a negative connotation and attention is focused on the spiritual.[34] According to Burkert, this stage is inaugurated by Plutarch's book on Isis and Osiris (late first, early second century CE). It is not quite clear what such a metaphysical interpretation would entail for the Eleusinian Mysteries, but certainly, the distance to the actual rituals would have been great.

In addition to an *interpretation* of the Mysteries, we also see that the mystery terminology is used *metaphorically* in various contexts in Greek culture and philosophy. Christoph Riedweg has investigated the meaning of a number of mystery terms in Plato, Philo, and Clement of Alexandria. He concludes that even before Plato the terms were applied in a metaphorical sense, and that the Athenian philosopher highly influenced their use in later times.[35] Plato uses the language of seeing (the holy things) by the initiands for the contemplation of the ideas, especially beauty, by the soul.[36] According to Riedweg, it

31 Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 72–73.
32 Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 73–78.
33 Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 78–84.
34 Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 84–88.
35 Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 69 and 160.
36 Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie* 68. See, for example, *Phaedrus* 250bc, where Plato speaks of the blessed vision of the souls that have not yet entered the body. This passage is

is this application of mystery terminology to mystical contemplation that the philosophical-religious tradition after him inherited from Plato.[37] And in the case of Philo and Clement of Alexandria, whom he investigated in detail, Riedweg adds explicitly that their use of the mystery terminology hardly stemmed from personal knowledge of actual mystery cults, but was rather due to the influence of the Platonic tradition.[38]

In Philo, however, we encounter another metaphorical application of the mystery terms, one which cannot be found in the Platonic tradition: getting to know the deeper sense of biblical texts through allegorical interpretation is viewed as an initiation into the mysteries of Scripture.[39] Christian theologians adopted this use of mystery terminology from this Jewish author; in the case of Clement of Alexandria, Riedweg undergirds this with evidence from his writings.[40]

3 Christianity and the Mysteries

The view of the relationship between Christianity and the mystery cults has changed considerably over time. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, several scholars, some of whom were linked to the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, thought that the Christian sacraments had their roots in what were then called the mystery religions. Among these schol-

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referred to in Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 40–41, 48, and in Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 92. The comic poet Mnesimachus (fourth century BCE), *Ex fabula incerta*, calls sleep 'the Lesser Mysteries of Death', and Plutarch, fragment 178, compares the things a soul undergoes at death with initiation into the mysteries. An English translation of Plutarch's passage can be found in Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 91–92 (in n. 11 on p. 162, Burkert inadvertently refers to it as fragment 168). J.N. Bremmer, 'Philosophers and Mysteries', in Chr. Riedweg (ed.), *PHILOSOPHIA in der Konkurrenz von Schulen, Wissenschaften und Religionen. Zur Pluralisierung des Philosophiebegriffs in Kaiserzeit und Spätantike*, Philosophie der Antike 34 (Berlin 2017), 95–117, discusses the use of mystery terminology by philosophers from the second to the sixth century CE, with reference to P. van Nuffelen, *Rethinking the Gods: Philosophical Readings of Religion in the Post-Hellenistic Period*, Greek Culture in the Roman World (Cambridge, UK 2011).

37 Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 160. Concrete examples of this are mentioned on pp. 104–107, 124–125, 145–147, 155–157.

38 Van Nuffelen, *Rethinking the Gods*, 203, concurs that Philo's metaphorical application of mystery vocabulary to philosophy 'is conditioned by a long-standing philosophical tradition, initiated by Plato'.

39 Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 160; see also pp. 73–74, 85–92.

40 Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 133–137.

ars were Richard Reitzenstein, Franz Cumont, and Alfred Loisy.[41] This view has largely been abandoned in favour of an emphasis on the Jewish roots of Christianity, and one of the key figures in this debate was Arthur Darby Nock (1902–1963), who has been described as 'arguably the greatest expert on the relations between Greco-Roman religion on the one hand, and both early Christianity and Judaism on the other, in the period from about 1930 to 1960.'[42]

Especially Nock's article 'Hellenistic Mysteries and Christian Sacraments' has been highly influential. He argues there that, 'Any idea that what we call the Christian sacraments were in their origin indebted to pagan mysteries or even to the metaphorical concepts based upon them shatters on the rock of linguistic evidence',[43] and: since knowledge of the mystery cults was widespread in the Greek-speaking world, '[i]t is the more surprising to see how slow and slight was the adaptation before the fourth century of anything like mystery terminology and even its metaphorical application as seen in Greek philosophers and in Philo'.[44]

Some Christian Gnostic groups adopted elements from the mystery cults,[45] but Christian authors who were later regarded as 'orthodox' also polemicized against the mystery cults, while at the same time using their terminology in a metaphorical sense. Thus Justin Martyr refers to mysteries when he speaks of gods that Christians once worshipped, but whom they have now come to despise, and when he argues that the demons imitate Christian worship in the pagan rituals.[46] But the apologist also uses the word 'mystery' to denote a figura-

41 See Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 1–2 (and n. 1 on p. 133), and Bremmer, *Initiation*, x and 143–144, for bibliographical information.

42 Bremmer, *Initiation*, 147–148. J.Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago 1990), who is critical of Nock's studies, among other things because he focuses on words and neglects 'issues of syntax, pragmatics and stylistics' (p. 77), acknowledges that a series of essays by (H.A.A. Kennedy and) A.D. Nock 'have become all but canonical in the literature on the relation of early Christianity to the religions of Late Antiquity' (p. 64).

43 A.D. Nock, 'Hellenistic Mysteries and Christian Sacraments', *Mnemosyne* 5 (1952), 177–213 (200); reprinted in idem, *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, vol. 2 (Oxford 1972), 791–820 (809). Towards the end of his article, Nock nuances this statement somewhat: 'To argue as I have done is not to suggest that pagan mysteries had no influence on the development and acceptance of Catholic Christianity; the surprise is that on the evidence they had so little' (p. 212/ 819).

44 Nock, 'Hellenistic Mysteries', 202/811.

45 Bremmer, *Initiation*, 158–159.

46 Justin Martyr, *Apologia* i.25.1 (Persephone and Aphrodite; see for Aphrodite: Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 201–211); and i.66.4 (Mithras), in C. Munier, *Justin: Apologie pour les chrétiens*, SC 507 (Paris 2006), 196 and 308; *Dialogus cum Tryphone* 70.1 (Mithras), 78.6 (Mithras), in

tive interpretation of Old Testament texts, as Philo did before him.[47] According to Riedweg, there is no application in Justin of mystery terms to mystical contemplation, which is something that belongs to the Platonic tradition.[48]

Furthermore, Justin calls baptism 'illumination' (φωτισμός), 'since they who learn these things are illuminated (φωτιζομένων) intellectually',[49] and elsewhere someone who has been baptized is said to be 'illuminated' (φωτισθέντος).[50] This has been interpreted as an early witness that mystery terminology was applied to the Christian sacraments,[51] although Nock has pointed out that, while light certainly played a role in pagan piety, the noun φωτισμός was not used to denote (pagan) initiation.[52] J. Ysebaert investigated Greek baptismal terminology in the early church, and states that Philo does not use the verb φωτίζειν and the noun φωτισμός in relation to the mysteries, but only in its literal sense and with the Jewish metaphorical meaning in the expression 'enlightening the soul',[53] adding that 'it appears more probable that its eventual rise in the mysteries was of a later date'.[54] His final conclusion is that 'the origin of the terms [φωτίζειν and φωτισμός] must be sought in the New Testament', which inherited them from Judaism, and not in the mystery cults.[55]

P. Bobichon, *Justin Martyr: Dialogue avec Tryphon*, vol. 1, Paradosis 47/1 (Fribourg 2003), 376 and 400.

47 See Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 147–148, for several references to Justin's writings.

48 Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 148.

49 Justin Martyr, *Apologia* i.61.12, in SC 507, 292; Tr.: T.B. Falls, *Saint Justin Martyr: The First Apology, The Second Apology, Dialogue with Trypho, Exhortation to the Greeks, Discourse to the Greeks, The Monarchy, or The Rule of God*, FOTC 6 (Washington, DC 1948), 100.

50 Justin Martyr, *Apologia* i.65.1, in SC 507, 302.

51 Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 156–157 (Justin is mentioned in n. 135). Bremmer, *Initiation*, 151 (Nock does not deny that the term φωτισμός was used for Christian baptism in the second century, as Bremmer states, but he suggests that it never denoted initiation in pagan piety; see the following note).

52 Nock, 'Hellenistic Mysteries', 203/811–812. A search in TLG for the strings φωτισμ and μυστηρ within 15 words does not falsify Nock's observation.

53 J. Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology: Its Origins and Early Development* (Nijmegen 1962), 161–162. His observation is confirmed by a search in TLG: the verb φωτίζειν is found seven times in Philo; five times it is used in a literal sense (of a flame, the sun, etc.), two times in reference to the soul (*De congressu eruditionis gratia* 106, and *De fuga et inventione* 139); φωτισμός occurs three times, twice in a literal sense (of the moon), once in a quotation from Psalm 26/27:1 (LXX).

54 Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, 162. He even asserts: 'We may conclude that it is not possible to establish with certainty whether φωτίζειν ever formed part of the vocabulary of the mysteries.'

55 Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, 176. Φώτισμα 'is coined on analogy with βάπτισμα and must be considered as a Christian neologism' (p. 174), probably invented by Clement of Alexandria (p. 175).

In Tertullian, too, we find the rejection of the mystery cults as idol worship,[56] and as imitations by demons of Christian rituals and teachings.[57] He uses the word *sacramentum*—often used to translate the Greek μυστήριον—for baptism and the Eucharist, but Nock warns that *sacramentum* had a wide range of meanings, so that we should be cautious in drawing conclusions from this.[58]

In his *Protrepticus* Clement of Alexandria denounces a whole range of mystery cults.[59] Riedweg investigated this part of the *Protrepticus* and concluded that the church father partly copied and commented on an existing handbook, and that he did not personally know any of the cults.[60] At the end of the same work, Clement opposes Christianity to the pagan mysteries,[61] but in the process certainly does not shun the use of mystery terminology to describe the Christian experience:

> O truly sacred mysteries! O pure light! In the blaze of the torches I have a vision of heaven and of God. I become holy by initiation. The Lord reveals holy things; He marks the initiate with His seal, illuminating him, and commends him, when he has believed, to the Father's care, where he is guarded for ages to come. These are the revels of my mysteries! If thou wilt, be thyself also initiated.[62]

This is one of the clearest examples where Clement stands in the Platonic tradition of metaphorical usage of mystery terms.[63] Moreover, 'He marks the initiate with His seal, illuminating him' refers to baptism,[64] and according to Riedweg,

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56 Tertullian, *Adversus Valentinianos* 1 (Eleusinia); *De baptismo* 5 (Isis and Mithras).

57 Tertullian, *De praescriptione haereticorum* 40 (Mithras); *De corona* 15 (Mithras).

58 Nock, 'Hellenistic Mysteries', 209–210/816–17. See also Christoph Auffahrt, 'Mysterien (Mysterienkulte)', *RAC* 25 (2013), 422–471, esp. 449–451.

59 Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 2.12–23, in M. Marcovich (ed.), *Clementis Alexandrini Protrepticus* (VCS 34; Leiden 1995), 20–33.

60 Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 117–123.

61 Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 12.118–123. The passage is discussed by Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 148–158.

62 Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 12.120.1–2, in Marcovich, *Protrepicus*, 173: Ὦ τῶν ἁγίων ὡς ἀληθῶς μυστηρίων, ὦ φωτὸς ἀκηράτου. Δᾳδουχοῦμαι τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐποπτεῦσαι, ἅγιος γίνομαι μυούμενος, ἱεροφαντεῖ δὲ ὁ κύριος καὶ τὸν μύστην σφραγίζεται φωταγωγῶν, καὶ παρατίθεται τῷ πατρὶ τὸν πεπιστευκότα αἰῶσι τηρούμενον. Ταῦτα τῶν ἐμῶν μυστηρίων τὰ βακχεύματα· εἰ βούλει, καὶ σὺ μυοῦ. Tr.: G.W. Butterworth, *Clement of Alexandria: The Exhortation to the Greeks. The Rich Man's Salvation. And the Fragment of an Address Entitled: To the Newly Baptized* (LCL 92; Cambridge, MA 1968), 257, modified.

63 See n. 37.

64 Ysebaert, *Greek Baptismal Terminology*, 423, writes in reference to this passage: 'Clement

this is 'an early example—albeit isolated—of the application of mystery terms to the sacrament of baptism'.[65]

Riedweg further sees in Clement a systematization of the metaphorical understanding of initiation in three stages, which, he suggests, may underlie the medieval mystical way: purification (τὰ καθάρσια, προκαθαίρειν and καθαρμοί), teaching (διδασκαλία) or transmission (παράδοσις), and contemplation (ἐποπτεία).[66] For the allegorical interpretation of biblical texts, Clement, like Philo, uses the terms 'mystery' (μυστήριον) and 'mystical' (μυστικός),[67] and he may also refer to those who can see beyond the literal sense of the text as *mystai*.[68]

In the course of the third century the polemical attacks voiced by Christian authors against pagan mysteries subsided, while an entirely new situation arose with the conversion of Constantine at the beginning of the fourth century, and the mass influx of new members into the church which followed it.[69] The use of mystery terms by Christian authors grew considerably, but the cause of this and the form it took have been interpreted differently by various scholars. Nock writes that 'the free application of mystery terminology to the Christian sacraments' belongs to this 'period of the triumph of the Church'.[70] His article, 'Hel-

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of Alexandria uses σφραγίζειν for Christian baptism considered as an initiation into the mysteries … The text has been quoted as proof that the seal as a name for baptism originated from the mysteries but, after our investigations, it may be clear that Clement merely intends to establish a connection between this seal and the seal of the mysteries.'

65 Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 156–157: 'ein allerdings nur vereinzeltes, frühes Beispiel für die Anwendung von Mysterientermini auf das Taufsakrament'.

66 Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 160, 5–11, 123–130, 137–147, with reference to Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 5.11.70.7–71.1–2 (1. τὰ καθάρσια, 2. τὰ μικρὰ μυστήρια διδασκαλίας τινὰ ὑπόθεσιν ἔχοντα, 3. τὰ μεγάλα [μυστήρια] and ἐποπτεύειν, in O. Stählin, L. Früchtel, and U. Treu (eds), *Clemens Alexandrinus II: Stromata Buch I–VI*, GCS 52 (Berlin 1985[4]), 373–374. *Religionsgeschichtlich*, Clement does not apply the terminology correctly; Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 8), and 7.4.27.6 (1. προκαθαίρειν and καθαρμοί, 2. παράδοσις, in O. Stählin, L. Früchtel, and U. Treu (eds), *Clemens Alexandrinus III: Stromata Buch VII und VIII, etc.*, GCS 17 (Berlin 1970[2]), 20). Other patristic authors, like Origen (especially in the prologue to his commentary on the Song of Songs), Gregory of Nyssa, and Evagrius of Pontus, also speak of three stages, and have influenced the medieval understanding of mystical theology. See Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford 1981), 57–60, 81–88, 102–113.

67 Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 133–137. Origen, too, applies 'mystery' and 'mystical' to the spiritual meaning of Old Testament texts, for example, when he speaks of interpretation in *De principiis* 4.2.

68 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.23.153.1 and 154.1, in GCS 52, 95 and 96.

69 Bremmer, *Initiation*, 161–162.

70 Nock, 'Hellenistic Mysteries', 210/818.

lenistic Mysteries and Christian Sacraments', focuses on the sacraments, but he is not unaware of the fact that mystery terms were also applied to other aspects of Christianity.[71] He regards the increase in their use as an answer to an internal rather than an external challenge: it was part of a pedagogic technique to instil the right sentiments into the many neophytes.[72] C. Auffahrt discusses the hypothesis of a 'cultic turn' ('kultische Wende'), seeds of which could already be seen in Origen, but which came to fruition with Eusebius and Constantine, and he links it with a change in meaning of the word μυστήριον.[73] Whereas this first indicated the whole mystery of salvation, it later became a *terminus technicus* for the sacraments.

According to G.G. Stroumsa, 'the popularity of terms like *mustagogein* after the fourth century has usually been explained by the fact that since in the Christianized empire, paganism was not anymore perceived as a threat, the vocabulary of the pagan mysteries could be used much more freely than ever before'.[74] Since there was now little chance that the audience would misunderstand the metaphorical character of the mystery terminology, it could be freely applied to Christian rituals and notions. Stroumsa does not reject this interpretation, but adds another point: he perceives a shift in the application of the terms, away from the sacraments and towards a more mystical understanding of the Christian experience. He argues that when baptism was restricted to a relatively small number of people, 'loaded' words like 'initiation' could be used for it, but when the masses were baptized, this 'lofty vocabulary' needed other terms of reference, and it came to be applied to the inner life of the spiritual man, in particular in 'mysticism'.[75] This shift caused the word μυστήριον to receive a different meaning, he argues: it 'has now become something ineffable, which cannot be fully expressed by words, rather than something which

71 Nock, 'Hellenistic Mysteries', 206–208/814–816.

72 Nock, 'Hellenistic Mysteries', 210–211/818.

73 Auffahrt, 'Mysterien (Mysterienkulte)', 451–453.

74 G.G. Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom: Esoteric Traditions and the Roots of Christian Mysticism* (2nd rev. ed.; Leiden/Boston 2005), 164. Stroumsa undergirds this statement by a reference to P. Batiffol, 'Arcane', in A. Vacant and E. Mangenot (eds), *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, vol. 1, part 2 (Paris 1923), 1738–1758, but the quotation (in n. 21 on p. 153; see also n. 10 on p. 30), 'lorsque tout risque d'équivoque aura disparu', cannot be found in Batiffol's article.

75 Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom*, 164. His view of the changing reference of mystery terms is part of a larger argument in his chapter, 'From Esotericism to Mysticism in Early Christianity' (pp. 147–168). To him, the mystery terminology belongs to the vocabulary of esotericism (pp. 147, 164). His disputed hypothesis that there were esoteric traditions in the first centuries of Christianity, inherited from Judaism, cannot be discussed in this paper.

must remain hidden'.[76] Burkert, who emphasizes the experiential character of the mystery cults, suggests that it was already a feature of the pagan mysteries themselves that their essence could not be expressed in words: 'Is it not true that the mysteries were "unspeakable", *arrheta*, not just in the sense of artificial secrecy utilized to arouse curiosity, but in the sense that what was central and decisive was not accessible to verbalization?'[77] And according to Riedweg, it was part of the Platonic tradition, inherited by Christian authors, that mystery terminology was metaphorically applied to mystical contemplation.[78] It seems, then, that what Stroumsa regards as a new development in the course of the fourth and fifth centuries CE was not new in the sense that it was previously absent. Instead, an already existing application of the mystery terminology gained in importance.

At the time of the emperor Theodosius I, who made Christianity the state religion and combatted the pagan cults with laws, the mysteries were even less regarded as a threat, and the mystery terminology could be incorporated into the Christian vocabulary even more freely. When Eleusis was sacked by the Gothic hordes of Alaric in 395, the walls of the sanctuary, and probably more than that, were ruined.[79] This brings us to the time of Cyril of Alexandria, who was about seventeen years old in 395, and who was bishop from 412 till his death in 444.

4 Cyril of Alexandria and the Mystery Cults

As an educated person, Cyril of Alexandria will have had some general knowledge of the mystery cults, but did he have more specific knowledge of mysteries performed in Alexandria or, more broadly, in Egypt? As early as early Ptolemaic times, there had been a suburb southeast of Alexandria called Eleusis, and an ancient source tells us that it was so named after Eleusis in Attica.[80] Whether there was ever a mystery cult at this Alexandrian Eleusis is a matter of debate among scholars. In his overview of mysteries in the *Protrepticus*, Clement of Alexandria gives 'the password of the Eleusinian mysteries',[81] and

76 Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom*, 168.

77 Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 69. The fourth chapter of his book (pp. 89–114) is called 'The Extraordinary Experience'.

78 See n. 37.

79 Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 29, 198. Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 8, 186.

80 P.M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 3 vols (Oxford 1972), vol. 1, 200.

81 Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* 2.21, in Marcovich, *Protrepicus*, 30: τὸ σύνθημα Ἐλευσινίων μυστηρίων.

Mylonas argues that Clement must have meant the mysteries at Alexandria rather than in Attica.[82] Clinton adopts Mylonas' view and adds as evidence a passage in Porphyry,[83] quoted by Eusebius,[84] where he speaks of the hierophant, the dadouchos, and the sacred herald of the Eleusinian Mysteries in a context of Egyptian cults.[85] Fraser, however, discusses a number of relevant passages and concludes that, while they 'forbid the supposition that any mysteries properly so called occurred there, the suburb was evidently the centre of an important festival in honour of Demeter'.[86] However this may be, I have not come across any reference to Eleusinian Mysteries in Alexandria in Cyril's writings.

Then there was a temple for the Egyptian goddess Isis in the town of Menouthis, not far east of Alexandria. All the imperial decrees and actions against pagan cults, as well as the anti-pagan policy of Cyril's uncle and predecessor as archbishop of Alexandria, Theophilus, had not led to the closure of this shrine, where healings allegedly took place after incubation, a night's sleep in the precincts of the temple, during which the worshippers could receive meaningful dreams. According to Sophronius of Jerusalem († 639/40), Cyril was told by an angel at night to move the martyr Cyrus from the Church of St. Mark in Alexandria to the Church of the Holy Evangelists in Menouthis.[87] Cyril found not only Cyrus, but also his companion John, and moved both to the town where 'the demon' resided. We also have fragments of homilies Cyril gave during the week of the translation of the relics, in which he calls on the faithful to come for healing to the Christian saints, rather than to 'the Lady' (ἡ Κυρά), as Isis was called.[88] According to McGuckin, 'the strategy worked': over time the veneration of the two saints supplanted the cult of Isis.[89] Cyril, then, was

82 Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 294–303.

83 Porphyry, *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων*, fr. 10.

84 Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 3.12.4.

85 Clinton, *The Sacred Officials*, 8–9.

86 Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, vol. 1, 200–201, with notes 80–95 in vol. 2, 338–342. Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 37, regards the evidence as 'inconclusive'; see also the references in n. 44 on p. 147. Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 76, briefly mentions the possibility of mysteries at the Alexandrian Eleusis.

87 Sophronius of Jerusalem, *Laudes in sanctos Cyrum et Joannem* 27, in P. Bringel, *Sophrone de Jérusalem: Panégyrique des saints Cyr et Jean* (Patrologia Orientalis 51/1, No. 226; Turnhout 2008), 16–72 (60).

88 *Homiliae diversae* 18, in PG 77, 1100C–1105B (1105A). R.E. Witt, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World* (Aspects of Greek and Roman Life; London 1971), 191, calls her Κυρία instead of Κυρά.

89 J.A. McGuckin, 'The Influence of the Isis Cult on St. Cyril of Alexandria's Christology', *SP* 24 (1993), 291–299 (294). See also idem, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology and Texts*, VCS 23 (Leiden 1994), 16–19. Witt, *Isis*, 183–191, 275,

very much aware of the strong influence which the Isis cult had on the people, even on Christians, but although mysteries of Isis existed,[90] there is no indication that the cult at Menouthis included initiation into mysteries; the emphasis was on incubation and healing.

Cyril does not mention the name of Isis, but there is no doubt that 'the Lady' meant this Egyptian goddess. He does refer explicitly to Adonis and Aphrodite,[91] when the biblical text speaks of Tammuz and Byblos. Once, he merely states that when the prophet writes that there were women sitting there weeping for Tammuz (Ezek 8:14), 'this is Adonis in the Greek language'.[92] In a second instance, however, he recounts (one version of) the myth, in his exposition of Isaiah 18:2, which reads: 'You who send pledges by sea and paper letters over the water'. Cyril reads ἐπιστολὰς βιβλίνας not as 'paper letters', but as 'letters of Byblos'.[93] His account of the myth reads as follows.[94] Adonis was born out of incest, and the father exposed the child on a mountain, where nymphs took care of him. When he had grown into a handsome young man, Aphrodite fell in love with him. Ares became jealous, took the form of a boar, and killed Adonis, so that he descended to Hades. Aphrodite wanted to bring him back, but Pluto's wife (this would be Persephone)[95] did not want to let him go. They agreed that each would have him for part of the year. The Greeks developed a feast, Cyril continues, to join Aphrodite in lamenting the death of Adonis, and to be joyful with her because of his return from Hades, adding: 'And up to our

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is mistaken in stating that Cyril built a church after destroying the shrine of Isis, since Theophilus had already built the Church of the Holy Evangelists, according to Sophronius, *Laudes* 27. Cyril's was a 'more subtle approach', as McGuckin, 'The Influence', 293, argues: he wanted to lure the people away from the still existing shrine of Isis.

90 See for the mysteries of Isis: Bowden, *Mystery Cults*, 156–180, and Bremmer, *Initiation*, 110–125.

91 See for Adonis: W. Atallah, *Adonis dans la littérature et l'art grecs* (Études et commentaires 62; Paris 1966); and W. Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual*, Sather Classical Lectures 47 (Berkeley 1979), 105–111.

92 *In Oseam* 4:15, in P.E. Pusey (ed.), *Sancti patris nostri Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini in xii prophetas*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1868), vol. 1, 113: τεθεᾶσθαι δέ φησιν ὁ προφήτης καὶ γυναίκας καθημένας καὶ θρηνούσας τὸν Θαμοὺζ, ὅς ἐστιν Ἄδωνις τῇ Ἑλλήνων φωνῇ. Burkert, *Structure*, 107, writes about the relationship between the rituals for Tammuz and those for Adonis: 'we can feel confident as to the general outline: the yearly festival of weeping for Tammuz spread from Mesopotamia to Syria and Palestine, and thence, with the name "Adonis", to Greece'. Cf. Atallah, *Adonis*, 11, 15–17, 61–62.

93 *In Isaiam* 18:1–2, in PG 70, 436C–444B. Tr.: R.C. Hill, *Cyril of Alexandria: Commentary on Isaiah*, 3 vols (Brookline, MA 2008), vol. 2, 30–36.

94 See for various versions of the myth, Atallah, *Adonis*, 23–91, and *passim*.

95 Cf. Justin Martyr, *Apologia* i.25.1 (see also n. 49); Burkert, *Structure*, 109.

own times, this play has been performed in the temples of Alexandria'.[96] Thus, the archbishop was well acquainted with this festival.

He then explains the 'letters to Byblos'. The people in Alexandria wrote a letter to the women in Byblos (ἐν Βίβλῳ)—an ancient town in Phoenicia—in which they announced that Adonis had been found, and they put the letter in a jar, which was lowered into the sea, 'after they had performed certain rites (τελετάς) over it'.[97] The jar was alleged to have travelled to Byblos (εἰς Βίβλον), where the devotees of Aphrodite found it, and stopped grieving. According to Burkert, the cult of Adonis 'never had the organization of mysteries reserved for initiates of either sex'.[98] It is also clear from Cyril's own description that the τελετάς he mentions are not 'mysteries' similar to those at Eleusis, but the term merely indicates certain rituals.

It seems, then, that Cyril was not familiar with any mystery cult still practised during his lifetime. The terminology will have come to him through the literature he read, Christian, Jewish (Philo), as well as pagan.

5 Cyril of Alexandria and Mystery Terminology

We now turn to the role that mystery terminology plays in Cyril's writings, and I shall start with the term μυσταγωγός (mystagogue) and three of its cognates: μυσταγωγία (mystagogy, spiritual guidance), μυσταγωγικός (mystagogical), and the verb μυσταγωγεῖν (to guide or teach spiritually, to initiate). I will summarize the (updated) findings of a study of these terms which I published elsewhere.[99] Searches in the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae show that it was not Cyril who introduced these terms into Christian theology, but he used them more often

96 *In Isaiam* 18:1–2, in PG 70, 441B: καὶ μέχρι τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς καιρῶν ἐν τοῖς κατ' Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ἱεροῖς ἐτελεῖτο τὸ παίγνιον τοῦτο. Tr.: my own. With respect to an earlier time, Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, vol. 1, 198, declares: 'the popularity of the cult [of Adonis] in Alexandria is attested by a pair of epigrams by Dioscorides, which seem close to life'.

97 *In Isaiam* 18:1–2, in PG 70, 441C: τελετάς τινας ἐπ' αὐτῷ ποιησάμενοι. Tr.: my own.

98 Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, 75–76. Atallah, *Adonis*, 274–301, discusses the evidence that has been forwarded in favour of mysteries of Adonis, and concludes: 'Cet examen des textes ne nous a fourni aucun argument décisif en faveur des mystères d'Adonis' (p. 300). He wants to leave open the possibility that 'mysteries' were added to the cult of Adonis through syncretism, but that would have happened quite late, and these 'mysteries' would have lost their secrecy.

99 H. van Loon, 'The Meaning of "Mystagogy" in Cyril of Alexandria', in P. van Geest (ed.), *Seeing through the Eyes of Faith: New Approaches to the Mystagogy of the Church Fathers*, LAHR 11 (Leuven 2016), 37–53.

than anyone else.[100] The total number of yields is 2,326, 415 of which are to be found in authentic works of Cyril of Alexandria. Of all the Christian authors before the ninth century, John Chrysostom comes closest with 65 hits, followed by Gregory of Nyssa (41 hits), and Maximus Confessor (40 hits).[101] The words are found less often in the works of pagan authors: ten times in Plutarch, and 24 times in Proclus. Philo uses them in four places, every time in a metaphorical sense.[102] Irenaeus is the first Christian author in whose work this terminology occurs, but on each of the three occasions he uses it, it refers to Gnostics, not to orthodox Christians. Clement of Alexandria is the first author to apply the mystagogy terms to Christian teaching and initiation (four out of seven times).[103] It is clear that Cyril of Alexandria did not introduce these terms into Christian theology, but he certainly gave a boost to their use.

What does the Alexandrian archbishop understand 'mystagogy' to mean? To him, mystagogy is both the first and the continuous initiation into the mystery of Christ. The word may indicate that someone who is not yet a Christian is being guided to become one, but it may also refer to the help given to someone who is a Christian to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ, τὸ Χριστοῦ μυστήριον. And the word 'mystery' in this expression does not specifically pertain to baptism and/or the Eucharist, but it has a meaning that Cyril borrows from 1 Timothy 3:16, which reads: 'Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness (τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον) is great: "He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by the angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory".' Cyril uses the expression 'mystery of godliness' a number of times in his writings. It indicates that the mystery of Christ encompasses the whole economy of salvation: his self-emptying, his becoming a human being, his life on earth, his suffering, death and resurrection, his ascension into heaven and his sitting at the right hand of the Father, and also the consequences all this has for human beings. The centre of this mystery is the incarnation, the incomprehensible coming together of divinity and humanity in Christ, the Son of God who has become a human being.

On the one hand, this implies that mystagogy has an important cognitive component: people need to be taught about Christ and about salvation. This is confirmed by the fact that the mystagogy terms are often found side by side with words like 'to teach' and 'to educate'. This is also in line with their

100 Searches in TLG on 13 February 2017.

101 See also P. Mueller-Jourdan, 'Mystagogie', in Schöllgen et al., *RAC*, vol. 25, 404–422.

102 Philo, *De somniis* 1.164 and 2.78; *De vita Mosis* 2.71; *De virtutibus* 178. See also Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 109–110.

103 See also Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 138, n. 36, and 150, n. 102.

usage by pagan authors, since, according to Riedweg, διδάσκαλος and μυσταγωγός 'are used quasi-synonymously' in at least two places in Dio Chrysostom and Plutarch.[104] Moreover, we see that in Philo and Clement of Alexandria μυσταγωγεῖν can mean something like 'to teach'.[105] But on the other hand, Cyril stresses repeatedly that this mystery transcends our human understanding, that we should not try to grasp it with our mind, but that it can only be received with the eyes of our νοῦς, in faith, by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The sacraments have a role to play in this, but this role is not emphasized when Cyril speaks about mystagogy.

As for the word 'mystery' (μυστήριον) itself, it occurs so often that I have not been able to investigate all the places in Cyril's works where it can be found.[106] However, I did check all the 54 occurrences of the word in Cyril's 29 extant festal letters.[107] It appears that in about half of the cases it is part of expressions such as 'the mystery of Christ', 'the mystery concerning Christ', 'the mystery of his incarnation', etc., while in many other cases it is clear from the context that the word should be understood in the same sense. In the plural, too, the term usually refers to the mystery of Christ. A few times the plural 'mysteries' indicates the content of spiritual interpretations of Old Testament texts and rituals. This is the metaphorical usage of mystery terminology that we first encountered in Philo, and then also in Clement of Alexandria.[108] In none of the instances in the festal letters does the word μυστήριον denote baptism, and it refers to the Eucharist only three times. In each of these three cases, the word 'divine' (θεῖος) has been added, once in the plural ('the divine mysteries'), and twice in the singular ('the divine mystery'). If it is a symptom of a 'cultic turn' that the meaning of the word μυστήριον changes from the mystery of salvation to a *terminus technicus* for the sacraments, as Auffahrt suggests,[109] then such a turn did not take place in Cyril of Alexandria.

Another term whose provenance lies in the mystery cults is hierophant (ἱεροφάντης), the name of the most important priest of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

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104 Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 127. See also p. 26, n. 109, and p. 111, n. 9.

105 Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 110 (Philo), and 138, n. 36 (Clement).

106 A search in TLG on 21 September 2016: μυστήριον occurs 854 times in the singular and 183 times in the plural in author = 4090 (Cyrillus Alexandrinus), without corrections for spurious writings or double occurrences (festal letters), and not including Cyril's works in author = 5000, work = 1 (*Concilium universale Ephesenum anno 431*).

107 See H. van Loon, *Living in the Light of Christ: Mystagogy in Cyril of Alexandria's Festal Letters*, LAHR 15 (Leuven 2017), 27–34. The numbers are given on p. 27, n. 13: μυστήριον occurs 43 times in the singular and 11 times in the plural in Cyril's festal letters.

108 See nn. 39, 40 and 67.

109 See n. 73.

This word, too, can be found relatively often in Cyril's writings, 76 times.[110] He may have been influenced in this respect by Didymus the Blind and Philo, who use the word quite often as well.[111] It is noteworthy that in each case, Cyril applies the title to Moses. Although the other two authors similarly use the term hierophant mostly in relation to Moses, Philo also gives the title to Jeremiah, and Didymus to Zechariah.[112] In a number of places, Cyril uses the word as a title, without any explanation of what he means by it: repeatedly, we find phrases like 'God spoke to the hierophant Moses'. According to Cyril's hermeneutics, the words that God spoke to Moses—in Cyril's view: the Pentateuch—are types, shadows, and riddles of the truth and the reality, which are to be found in Jesus Christ.[113] As has been mentioned, the archbishop sometimes speaks of the deeper sense of the words and the rituals in the Pentateuch, which concerns Christ and his salvation, as 'mysteries'. As a hierophant, Moses has received these words and rituals, with their deeper meaning, from God, and he has passed them on.

We now arrive at the term which prompted de Durand to formulate his hypothesis: δᾳδουχία (torchbearing). As mentioned above, Cyril uses this word much more often than any of the other church fathers, even if we include its cognates torchbearer (δᾳδοῦχος) and 'to carry a torch' (δᾳδουχεῖν), or, in its passive form, 'to be illuminated [by torches]' (δᾳδουχεῖσθαι).[114] In Philo we encounter these words three times, all in a metaphorical sense: in one place education is said to illuminate (δᾳδουχοῦσα) the intellect,[115] in another God is called a dadouchos whose judgement is like torches of fire which are lighted (δᾳδουχούμεναι).[116] In Clement of Alexandria, we find the word for the office-bearer and the verb three times in his discussion of the mystery cults in the

110 Search in TLG on 21 September 2016: 72 times in author = 4090 (corrected for double occurrences in the festal letters; none in spurious writings), three times in author = 5000, work = 1, and once in author = 5000, work = 2 (*Scholia de incarnatione unigeniti*).

111 Search in TLG on 21 September 2016: 32 times in authentic works of Didymus, 26 times in Philo.

112 Philo, *De cherubim* 49. Didymus, *Commentarii in Zacchariam* 6:12. See for Philo also Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 72–73, 89–90, 97, 114.

113 See for Cyril's hermeneutics, H. van Loon, 'The Role of the New Testament in Cyril of Alexandria's Attitude towards Jews and Judaism', in R. Roukema and H. Amirav (eds), *The 'New Testament' as a Polemical Tool: Studies in Ancient Christian Anti-Jewish Rhetoric and Beliefs*, Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus (Göttingen 2018), 157–176.

114 See n. 8. Although the cognates are found more often in the other fathers, their total number of occurrences is considerably less than the 24 times that δᾳδουχία occurs in Cyril's writings.

115 Philo, *De ebrietate* 168. See also Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie*, 155–156.

116 Philo, *Quis rerum divinarum heres* 311.

Protrepticus, and the verb once in a metaphorical sense, in the passage where he describes the Christian experience by using mystery terminology.[117]

Cyril of Alexandria himself never uses the noun 'dadouchos', the verb only once,[118] but the word δᾳδουχία 24 times. An investigation of the texts in which this noun occurs shows that the passage in the *Dialogues on the Trinity*, with which this article began, is representative in the sense that in most cases it concerns the δᾳδουχία of the Holy Spirit, which can be interpreted as the enlightenment by the Spirit. Several times, Cyril explicitly shows that this is the meaning of the word by adding a term that implies light or shining. For example, in his commentary on the twelve minor prophets he writes: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared and was sent to us on mission, as he himself said, "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel", to illuminate with the torchlight of the Spirit those in darkness'.[119]

Thus, δᾳδουχία is metaphorically applied to the enlightenment by the Spirit, and it is not specifically related to baptism. This is obvious, since Cyril writes several times that the Old Testament prophets received this torchlight from the Spirit.[120] He even makes an explicit distinction between the prophets, in whom there was this torchlight, and those who believe in Christ, in whom 'there is not simply a torchlight from the Spirit, but we are confident that the Spirit himself dwells in us and takes up residence'.[121]

Another set of terms is μύστης (initiate) and its cognates. The words μύησις and μύστης are totally absent from Cyril's writings, but twice we encounter ἱερομύστης, which, according to Liddell and Scott, is 'one who initiates in sacred things'.[122] On neither occasion does Cyril apply it to believing Jews or Chris-

117 See nn. 59–62.

118 *Commentarii in Joannem* 1:9, in P.E. Pusey (ed.), *Cyrillus Alexandrinus: In D. Joannis Evangelium: Accedunt fragmenta varia necnon tractatus ad Tiberium diaconum duo*, vol. 1 (Oxford 1872; repr.: Brussels 1965), 105: δᾳδουχεῖ δὲ αὐτοῖς ὁ Μονογενὴς.

119 *In Oseam* 4:1–2, in Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, vol. 1, 92: ἐπεφάνη γὰρ ἡμῖν ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς, καὶ ἀπεστάλη, καθά φησιν αὐτὸς, "εἰς τὰ ἀπολωλότα πρόβατα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ", ἵνα φωτίσῃ τῇ διὰ Πνεύματος δᾳδουχίᾳ τοὺς ἐσκοτισμένους. Tr.: R.C. Hill, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Commentary on the twelve Prophets*, 3 vols, FOTC 115, 116 and 124 (Washington, DC 2007–2012), vol. 1, 103, modified.

120 *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* 11:1–3; 11:11; 26:11; 55:1–3a.

121 *In Joannem* 7:39, in Pusey, *In D. Joannis Evangelium*, vol. 1, 696; Tr.: J.C. Elowsky (ed.) and D.R. Maxwell (trans.), *Cyril of Alexandria: Commentary on John*, 2 vols, Ancient Christian Texts (Downers Grove, IL 2013 and 2015), vol. 1, 311. See also Crawford, *Theology of Scripture*, 105–106.

122 H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (9th ed., rev. by H.S. Jones; Oxford 1996), s.v. ἱερομύστης.

tians, but the first instance refers to followers of Baal-Peor,[123] and the second time these initiators are said to belong to the 'wicked people' mentioned in Isaiah 25:3–5 (LXX).[124] The verb μυεῖν (to initiate) and the adjective ἀμύητος (uninitiated) occur only a few times, but some of these texts are interesting. Once the verb is found in the context of the word ἱερομύστης, where it is said that Israelite men 'were initiated in the mysteries' (μεμύηνται) of Baal-Peor,[125] but in another place it is applied to initiation into the Christian faith. Cyril argues there that people should not be admitted to baptism, and thereby to the Eucharist, too quickly, but that they should be instructed properly first. He adds that Christ himself gave us an example when he 'would not entrust himself to them' (the people who believed in his name because of the signs he did; John 2:24); according to Cyril, the Lord there explains to whom initiation (τὸ μυεῖσθαι) should appropriately be given.[126] In this case, initiation stands for baptism. Finally, the verb occurs twice in a passage in *De exitu animi*, where the just and the sinners are compared: 'the just are initiated (μυοῦνται) by angels, the sinners are initiated (μυοῦνται) by demons', but it is doubtful whether this passage was written by Cyril.[127]

The adjective ἀμύητος is found seven times in Cyril's writings:[128] once it occurs in a quotation from Hermes,[129] another time it refers to Judaism, when the archbishop states that 'to explain the law to aliens and to unveil the divine mysteries to the uninitiated was slanderous',[130] and the remaining five times it is related to initiation into the Christian faith. Three times ἀμύητοι does not mean much more than 'those who are not Christians (yet)'; the context does

123 *In Oseam* 4:13–14, in Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, vol. 1, 111.

124 *In Isaiam* 25:3–5, in PG 70, 560.

125 *In Oseam* 4:13–14, in Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, vol. 1, 111.

126 *In Joannem* 2:24, in Pusey, *In D. Joannis Evangelium*, vol. 1, 96.

127 *De exitu animi*, in PG 77, 1081. See for the authorship of this homily: Marcel Richard, 'Les écrits de Théophile d'Alexandrie', *Le Muséon* 52 (1939), 33–50 (41–42). A search in TLG for the lemma μυέω on 19 September 2016 yielded eight results in author = 4090, and none in author = 5000, work = 1 or 2: four places are mentioned in the body of the text, once the verb is found in a spurious writing, and three times μυῶν is the genitive plural of μῦς (mouse), rather than a participle of μυέω.

128 A search in TLG on 17 September 2016 yielded eight results, of which one double (festal letters), in author = 4090, and none in author = 5000, work = 1 or 2. The adverb ἀμυήτως occurs only once, in *Commentarii in Matthaeum* 1:20, where it is applied to the relationship between Joseph and the Virgin Mary.

129 *Contra Julianum* 1.48.

130 *In Joannem* 7:35, in Pusey, *In D. Joannis Evangelium*, vol. 1, 685: τὸ δὲ ἐξηγεῖσθαι τοῖς ἀλλογενέσι τὸν νόμον, καὶ τὰ θεῖα τοῖς ἀμυήτοις ἀνακαλύπτειν μυστήρια, διαβεβλημένον. Tr.: Elowsky and Maxwell, *Commentary on John*, vol. 1, 306. Here, τὰ θεῖα μυστήρια does not denote the Eucharist, but Jewish 'mysteries'.

not indicate any relation to the sacraments.[131] On one occasion, it is said of Abraham, when he goes to the mountain to sacrifice his son Isaac, that 'as a wise man (…) he keeps silence, not revealing the mystery to those yet uninitiated [the servants]', which makes him an example for us, who should not throw our pearls before swine. Cyril explicitly interprets the 'pearls' as 'the clear and shining words of the Spirit', not as baptism or the Eucharist.[132]

In the seventh and last instance of ἀμύητος, Cyril argues, as in his commentary on John 2:24, that those who are new to the Christian faith should receive teaching before they are admitted to the Eucharist: 'For we do not lead to the divine and bloodless sacrifice those who have just been called, and have stepped out unto the beginnings of believing, and are yet uninitiated; rather, we instruct them first'.[133] Before they may participate in 'the divine and bloodless sacrifice', that is, in the Eucharist, they must be initiated. It seems likely that by this initiation Cyril means baptism, which may only take place after the necessary catechesis. We may conclude that μύστης and its cognates are applied to baptism only twice in all of Cyril's extant writings, and that this initiation by baptism is a prerequisite for participation in the Eucharist.

We will now look at ἐποπτεία, the term for the highest degree of initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries. This word occurs relatively often in Cyril's writings, 32 times,[134] but its meaning does not have a metaphorical relationship with its use in the mysteries. Its sense is rather deduced from the root of the word, 'to see'. Whereas in the mysteries, ἐποπτεία refers to the vision that is granted to people, the initiands, in each case in which Cyril uses the term, it concerns God's ἐποπτεία, not that of people. It could be translated as 'supervision': God's supervision over people, which Cyril mostly links with God's love, but several times also with punishment. Thus in one of the festal letters he uses the word with a connotation of love: 'But since we have been granted mercy

131 *In Joannem* 17:9–11; 17:14–15; 18:24–27.

132 *Epistulae festales* 5.7, in P. Évieux et al. (eds.), *Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Lettres Festales I–VI*, SC 372 (Paris 1991), 322. Tr.: P.R. Amidon and J.J. O'Keefe (eds), *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Festal Letters 1–12*, FOTC 118 (Washington, DC 2009), 98. The context of this passage is discussed in van Loon, *Living in the Light of Christ*, 32–34.

133 *Glaphyra in Exodum*, Book 2, in PG 69, 440C: Οὐ γὰρ ὁμοῦ κεκλημένους, καὶ εἰς τὰς τοῦ πιστεύειν ἀρχὰς ἐκβεβηκότας, καὶ ἀμυήτους ἔτι προσκομίζομεν τῇ θείᾳ τε καὶ ἀναιμάκτῳ θυσίᾳ· προκατηχοῦντες δὲ μᾶλλον. Tr.: my own.

134 A search in TLG for the lemma ἐποπτεία on 19 September 2016: 31 results in author = 4090 (corrected for double occurrences in the festal letters; none in spurious writings), and one in author = 5000. It may be added that all six hits in Cyril's *Expositio in Psalmos* are in passages which R. Devreesse, *Les anciens commentateurs grecs des Psaumes*, Studi e Testi 264 (Vatican City 1970), 224–233, regards as inauthentic. This leaves 26 occurrences.

and providential care [ἐποπτείας] by him, gaining that together with the other things in Christ, we will be transformed unto life enduring, and we are under the eyes of the Father of all, and will remain to be kept'.[135] But in his commentary on Amos, he says: 'The God of all would not cease *fixing his eyes on them*, an index of anger and threat (…) Since God surveys also good and righteous people, however, he distinguishes between the different glances [τὸ τῆς ἐποπτείας διάφορον] by saying *for trouble and not for good*'. Here, the supervision has negative consequences, but Cyril does not leave the positive alternative unmentioned. Thus, in Cyril ἐποπτεία does not have the meaning of 'contemplation', which it sometimes has in Clement of Alexandria, who also relates it explicitly with the mystery cults.[136]

Something similar applies to ἐπόπτης, the term for someone who undergoes, or has undergone, the highest degree of initiation.[137] In Cyril's writings, this term has no relationship to the mysteries either. Mostly, it is used in the same way as ἐποπτεία: God as ἐπόπτης, as the one who watches his people. Thus in his exposition of the parable of the vine and the branches, the archbishop writes: '[S]urely the reference to the vine grower in this passage is quite apt since it introduces the one who watches over [τὸν ἐπόπτην] and cares for everything, that is, God'.[138] A few times, however, it is said of people who are eyewitnesses. For example, in his commentary on John 19:35, which speaks of someone who testifies of what he himself has seen, namely, that Jesus was pierced with a spear on the cross, Cyril writes: 'He says that the disciple who testified to these things was a spectator [ἐπόπτην], as it were, and a witness to the event'.[139] There is no reference whatsoever to the mystery cults.

Finally two terms that de Durand does not mention, but which are often used in relation to the mysteries: ὄργια and τελετή. As for ὄργια, which can refer to

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135 *Epistulae festales* 24.2, in PG 77, 900C: Ἐπειδὴ δὲ τῆς παρ' αὐτοῦ φειδοῦς τε καὶ ἐποπτείας ἠξιώμεθα, καὶ τοῦτο μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἐν Χριστῷ κερδαίνοντες, εἰς μακραίωνα βίον μεταστοιχειούμεθα, καὶ ἐσμὲν ἐπ' ὀφθαλμοῖς τοῦ πάντων Πατρὸς, καὶ μενοῦμεν εἰς διατήρησιν. Tr.: P.R. Amidon and J.J. O'Keefe (eds), *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Festal Letters 13–30*, FOTC 127 (Washington, DC 2013), 144–145.

136 For example, Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.28.176, in GCS 52, 108. See also n. 66.

137 A search in TLG for the lemma ἐπόπτης on 19 September 2016: 13 results in author = 4090 (corrected for double occurrences in the festal letters; none in spurious writings), and none in author = 5000, work = 1 and 2.

138 *In Joannem* 15:1, in Pusey, *In D. Joannis Evangelium*, vol. 2, 537: πῶς οὐ λίαν ἐν τούτοις πρεπωδεστάτη τοῦ γεωργοῦντος ἡ δήλωσις, τὸν ἐπόπτην τῶν ὅλων καὶ ἐπιμελητὴν εἰσφέρουσα, τουτέστι Θεόν; Tr.: Elowsky and Maxwell, *Commentary on John*, vol. 2, 212.

139 *In Joannem* 19:32–37, in Pusey, *In D. Joannis Evangelium*, vol. 3, 103: ἐπόπτην δὲ ὥσπερ καὶ θεωρὸν τοῦ πράγματος αὐτὸν γενέσθαι φησὶ τὸν περὶ τῶν τοιούτων μαρτυρήσαντα μαθητὴν. Tr.: Elowsky and Maxwell, *Commentary on John*, vol. 2, 354.

all sorts of rites, this word occurs only once in Cyril's extant oeuvre, and then it concerns the gods of the Greeks.[140] Τελετή, 'ritual', is found thirteen times, each time in the plural, and, interestingly enough, only in his commentaries on Isaiah and on the twelve minor prophets, both works written during the first ten years of Cyril's episcopate.[141] The word is not applied to rites in Christianity, or to rites related to the God of Israel within Judaism, but only to rites used in idol worship, whether by Jews or by gentiles. The archbishop follows the Septuagint in this respect.[142] To give one example: in relation to judgement he writes in his commentary on Micah: 'the people of Israel occupied *hills* and *mountains* in offering rites [τελετάς] and sacrifices there "under every oak and poplar"'.[143] Thus, Cyril incorporated neither ὄργια nor τελετή into the vocabulary of Christian theology.

6 Conclusion

Our investigation of Cyril of Alexandria's use of the mystery terms allows us to conclude that he did not have a policy of Christianizing the vocabulary of the mystery cults. Some of the important terms are absent from his writings (μύησις, μύστης) or they have a meaning that is not metaphorically related to the pagan mysteries (ἐποπτεία, ἐπόπτης), while other terms are only applied to non-Christian rituals (ὄργια, τελετή). It is true, though, that Cyril uses some of the mystery terms more often (sometimes considerably so) than earlier fathers. This applies especially to 'mystagogy' and its cognates, but also to 'hierophant' and διδαχή, the word which prompted this study.

These terms receive a distinctively Christian meaning in Cyril's oeuvre. Mystagogy is both the first and the continuous initiation into the mystery of Christ. Cyril reserves the title 'hierophant' for Moses as the one who received from God words and rituals with a spiritual content, which he passed on, first to Israel,

140 *De adoratione*, Book 17, in PG 68, 1069CD.

141 See for the dating of these two works: G. Jouassard, 'L'activité littéraire de saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie jusqu'à 428: Essai de chronologie et de synthèse', in *Mélanges É. Podechard* (Lyon 1945), 159–174 (161–163, 170); and A. Davids, 'Jesaja en Dodekapropheton in de eerste tien Paasbrieven van Cyrillus van Alexandrië: Vooronderzoek in de context van het jodendom in Alexandrië', in F.G.M. Broeyer and E.M.V.M. Honée (eds), *Profetie en godsspraak in de geschiedenis van het christendom* (Zoetermeer 1997), 52–62.

142 See 1 Kgs 15:12; Amos 7:9; 3 Macc 2:30; Wis 12:4, 14:15, 14:23.

143 *In Michaeam* 6:1–2, in Pusey, *In xii prophetas*, vol. 1, 692–693. Tr.: Hill, *Commentary on the Twelve Prophets*, vol. 2, p. 247. See also n. 97, where the term is used in relation to Adonis and Aphrodite.

and then to those who believe in Christ. This can be seen as a metaphorical application of the term: instead of showing material 'holy things', Moses passes on spiritual 'holy things'. And whereas the title 'dadouchos' is absent, δᾳδουχία occurs relatively often, in the sense of enlightenment by the Holy Spirit, which may also be regarded as a metaphor related to the literal provision of light during the mystery cults.

Both the word 'mystery' itself and 'mystagogy' and its cognates occur hundreds of times in Cyril's works, and in the vast majority of cases they refer to the mystery of Christ and his salvation. Thus the usage of this terminology does not indicate a 'cultic turn' in Auffahrt's sense of the word, since μυστήριον only rarely denotes baptism or the Eucharist. The cases in which μυεῖν and ἀμύητος are related to baptism are so few that they do not alter this conclusion.

Stroumsa sees a shift in another direction: whereas 'mystery' was first used for the sacraments, after the fourth century it came to be applied to the inner life of the spiritual (wo)man, especially in mysticism. It is certainly true that in Cyril's writings the mystery terms often point to the inner life of the Christian, but this is not a new metaphorical use, as it can already be encountered in the Platonic tradition, in Philo, and in Clement of Alexandria. It could be said, however, that the application of mystery terminology to the spiritual life is more prominent in Cyril's works. The enlightenment that is expressed in Cyril's writings by the word δᾳδουχία is an inner working of the Holy Spirit, and although mystagogy has an important cognitive component, the archbishop also emphasizes that we cannot apprehend the mystery of Christ with our mind, but our spiritual eyes need to be opened by the Spirit, and then we can receive it by faith. This is not restricted to people who are regarded as mystics, but it applies to all Christians.

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CHAPTER 6

Augustine's Reassessment of the Commemoration Meal: *Quod quidem a christianis melioribus non fit*

Paula Rose

1 The Commemoration Meal: Augustine's Reform of a Refreshment

Several early Christian burial inscriptions use *refrigerium* and *refrigerare* to indicate the blessed state of the dead. More specifically, *refrigerium* and *refrigerare* refer to the refreshment offered to the deceased by their relatives when they celebrate a commemoration meal.[1] A particular example of this refreshment is found in *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* 8.1, where Perpetua sees her dead brother in a dream. In an earlier dream she had seen him pale, flushed and thirsty, with the wound he had when he died. He was seven years old at the time. Perpetua saw how her brother was too small to reach over the edge of a pool. In her second dream she sees him drinking and playing like a child: *uideo* (…) *Dinocraten* (…) *refrigerantem*.[2] Dinocrates drinking is often interpreted as a deceased person enjoying the *refrigerium*, the commemoration meal offered by his relatives.[3]

In many of his works, Augustine discusses the commemoration meal and recalibrates this pre-Christian ritual in the light of Scripture. He often opposes its excesses, in particular drunkenness and its consequences: singing songs, dancing. The main question in this paper concerns Augustine's reassessment of this phenomenon. How does Augustine's opinion on this matter develop over the years?

A second question deals with the difference between deceased family members and the martyrs. Does Augustine make a distinction in allowing a commemoration meal for these two distinct groups of deceased, as Frits van der Meer argues in *Augustine the Bishop*?[4] Thirdly, I will discuss the differences

1 P.J. Rose, *'Refrigerium'*, in C.P. Mayer (ed.), *Augustinus-Lexikon*, Vol. 4 (Basel 2018), 1104–1107.

2 'I see (…) Dinocrates (…) being refreshed.' Translation by the author.

3 E.g. in P. Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul: Afterlife and Wealth in Early Western Christianity* (Cambridge, MA 2015), 37.

4 F. van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop: The Life and Work of a Father of the Church* (London 1983[3]), 462–468.

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in text type (narrative, argumentative, prescriptive) and genre (letter, sermon, treatise, polemic, apology) between the various sources of Augustine's opinion on the commemoration meal. Do these differences influence the intensity of Augustine's opposition? Finally, formal aspects of Augustine's opposition are taken into account, such as the use of scriptural arguments and rhetorical figures. Before these issues are addressed, section 2 offers a brief indication of the part played by the commemoration meal in pre-Christian burial practice.

2 The Commemoration Meal in Antiquity

The commemoration meal in pre-Christian Greek and Roman culture has been described on the basis of literary, epigraphical, and archaeological sources. In ancient Roman society, the dead were commemorated and honoured with edible and drinkable sacrifices several times a year. Traces of various food products have been found, for instance, at the graves outside Porta Nocera in Pompeii: wine,[5] bread, cake, fruit, possibly also meat and fish.[6] Archaeological research at Roman cemeteries shows that ancient graves were equipped with *triclinia* or 'dining-rooms',[7] tubes for pouring libations,[8] and *mensae* or altar slabs.[9]

The ceremony of sacrifice and the commemoration meal took place at the time of the funeral,[10] and on the ninth day after death,[11] the *cena nouemdialis* or *silicernium*.[12] This included the *suffitio*, the burning of perfumes, a purifica-

5 S. Lepetz and W. van Andringa, *'Publius Vesonius Phileros uiuos monumentum fecit*: Investigations in a sector of the Porta Nocera cemetery in Roman Pompeii', in M. Carroll and J. Rempel (eds), *Living through the Dead: Burial and Commemoration in the Classical World*, (Oxford 2011), 110–133 (111).

6 Lepetz and Van Andringa, *'Publius Vesonius'*, 124–125.

7 R.M. Jensen, 'Dining with the Dead', in L. Brink and D. Green (eds), *Commemorating the Dead: Texts and Artifacts in Context*, (Berlin 2008), 107–143 (118–120); Lepetz and Van Andringa, *'Publius Vesonius'*, 130–131.

8 Jensen, 'Dining with the dead', 118–119.

9 Cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 310.2, about the *mensa Cypriani*.

10 E.-J. Graham, 'From fragments to ancestors: Re-defining the role of *os resectum* in rituals of purification and commemoration in Republican Rome', in M. Carroll and J. Rempel (eds), *Living through the Dead: Burial and Commemoration in the Classical World*, (Oxford 2011), 91–109 (92).

11 F. Prescendi, 'Novendiale sacrum', *NP* 8 (2000), 1027–1028.

12 M. Carroll, *'Memoria* and *Damnatio Memoriae*: Preserving and erasing identities in Roman

tion ritual. The nine days counted as a period of mourning which was under a taboo.[13] Subsequently, a commemoration meal was prepared on the 30th day after death, during the *parentalia*, the Roman festival of the deceased relatives (13–21 February), and on the birthday and anniversary of a person's death. According to Sébastien Lepetz and William van Andringa, the goal of these meals was not to let the deceased have a share in the food and beverage, but to make a sacrifice to the souls of the deceased.[14]

These widespread ceremonies continued in early Christianity.[15] Peter Brown describes the goal for third-century Christians as follows: 'The meal was called a *refrigerium*, a feast of refreshment and good cheer. It was thought to mirror the rest that the departed soul was believed to have come to enjoy.'[16] Robin Jensen discusses both archaeological evidence of early Christian commemoration meals and the ways in which Tertullian, for example, criticizes the continuation of this ceremony.[17] Ramsay MacMullen supposes that there was opposition between the practice of ordinary Christians, who celebrated the commemoration meal, and the leaders of the Church, who opposed this non-Christian ceremony.[18] Among early Christian authors, it is Augustine who has drawn the attention of many scholars for his fierce criticism. This paper aims to nuance Augustine's criticism by investigating the linguistic form and the literary context of his utterances. To set the scene for this analysis, the scholarly investigation of Augustine's view on the commemoration meal will be discussed briefly in section 3.

3 Augustine on the Commemoration Meal: Interpretations by Other Scholars

Many scholars have investigated the development in Augustine's evaluation of the commemoration meal. Generally, Augustine is thought to have prohibited eating and drinking in honour of the deceased martyrs and to have permitted an *agape* meal in commemoration of deceased family members. This

funerary commemoration', in M. Carroll and J. Rempel (eds), *Living through the Dead: Burial and Commemoration in the Classical World*, (Oxford 2011), 65–90 (67).

13 Lepetz and Van Andringa, *'Publius Vesonius'*, 111.

14 Lepetz and Van Andringa, *'Publius Vesonius'*, 111.

15 E. Jastrzębowska, 'Totenkult 6: Christentum', *NP* 12/1 (2002), 713–714.

16 Brown, *The Ransom of the Soul*, 36.

17 Jensen, 'Dining with the Dead', 120–123.

18 See R. MacMullen, *The Second Church: Popular Christianity A.D. 200–400*, (Leiden 2009).

distinction was made by Frits van der Meer,[19] more recently by Éric Rebillard, based on *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 48.1.15 and *Sermo* 361.6.6,[20] and by Martin Klöckener, who bases this distinction mainly on Augustine's letters 22 and 29.[21]

Victor Saxer discusses 26 sources, mainly Augustinian texts, on the basis of which he concludes that Augustine's opinion on the commemoration meal developed from rigid disapproval in the years 392 to 401, to a more charitable stance in the subsequent decade, after which, in 410–411, Augustine's opposition was rekindled in his controversy with the Donatists.[22] Augustine's discussion of this subject came to a peaceful conclusion in the eighth book of *De ciuitate Dei*, where Augustine, according to Saxer, reaps the successful result of his efforts: 'les banquets subsistent, même chez les catholiques, mais en nombre limité et avec une signification changée.'[23] The author concludes that the excesses of dancing and singing diminished after Augustine's interventions, but the eating and drinking during the commemoration of the martyrs still continued. Saxer does not pay attention to the differences in text type between the sources he discusses. Neither does he analyse the various kinds of arguments used by Augustine in these sources.

Frits van der Meer considers old age the cause of Augustine's clement judgement in *De ciuitate Dei*, a text which he qualifies as an apology: 'Here speaks the apologist who is under compulsion of making out a case for something which in point of fact he does not permit among his own congregation.'[24]

Jensen does not distinguish clearly between the *agape* in honour of deceased family members and the cult of the martyrs:

> Toleration for certain kinds of private celebrations was probably politically wise and although he disapproved, Augustine probably turned a blind eye to those long-cherished traditions, especially as they offered some consolation to mourning family members. Nevertheless, as noted

19 Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, about the commemoration meals in honour of the martyrs: 462–466; about the *agape* on behalf of deceased family members: 466–468.

20 E. Rebillard, *'Nec deserere memorias suorum*: Augustine and the Family-based Commemoration of the Dead', *Augustinian Studies* 36.1 (2005), 99–111 (104–106).

21 M. Klöckener, *Festa sanctorum et martyrum*, in C.P. Mayer (ed.), *Augustinus-Lexikon*, Vol. 2 (Basel 2002), 1281–1305.

22 V. Saxer, *Morts, martyrs, reliques en Afrique chrétienne aux premiers siècles: les témoignages de Tertullien, Cyprien et Augustin à la lumière de l'archéologie africaine*, Théologie historique 55 (Paris 1980), 134–147.

23 Saxer, *Morts, martyrs, reliques*, 146.

24 Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, 526.

above, Augustine recognizes and praises those 'better' families who had abandoned the practice.[25]

4 The Commemoration Meal: Augustine's Vocabulary

In contrast to other early Christian sources, mainly inscriptions, Augustine does not use *refrigerium* and *refrigerare* to indicate the commemoration meal. He refers to the commemoration meal in honour of the martyrs with the word *conuiuium* or 'dinner' (*Epistula* 22.6). According to him, others call this ritual *laetitia* or 'feast' (*Epistula* 29.2). Monica transforms her *sollemnes epulae* or 'ceremonial banquet' (*Confessiones* 6.2.2) into the giving of alms. In *Sermo* 361.6.6 Augustine uses the verb *parentare* for the commemoration meal in honour of a deceased family member, a reference to the festival of the *parentalia*.

5 Augustinian Sources

The major sources from Augustine's oeuvre used in the discussion of his opposition to the commemoration meal are listed in Table 6.1 below. The table contains texts originating from various periods of Augustine's life, consisting of various (combinations of) text types and displaying various generic characteristics.

This list contains letters, sermons, and monographs. The text type may differ within these genres. Of the two letters, for instance, *Epistula* 22 is a prescriptive text, in which Augustine urges bishop Aurelius of Carthage to cleanse the commemoration days of the martyrs of eating, drinking and drunkenness. The other letter, *Epistula* 29, is a triumphant narrative in which Augustine recounts how he managed to ban the meals in honour of the deceased martyrs from the Catholic church in Hippo. In most of the cases, the text type of the sermon is a mixture of argument and prescription. The quotations from the sermons discussed in this paper are mainly prescriptive, whereas the quotations from *Sermones* 252.4 and 361.6 are argumentative. The quotations from the two sources written for a non-Christian audience (*Contra Faustum* and *De ciuitate Dei*) are argumentative. The narrative in *Confessiones* 6.2.2 may be read as a classical *exemplum*.

25 Jensen, 'Dining with the Dead', 136–137; 142. Jensen ('Dining with the Dead', 142 n. 80) refers to *De ciuitate Dei* 7.26, but probably means 8.27. Augustine speaks there of 'better Christians' (*melioribus christianis*) not 'better families'. In *De ciuitate Dei* 8.27 Augustine does not address family ties, but the cult of the martyrs.

TABLE 6.1 Augustinian sources in chronological order

Epistula 22	c. 392[a]
Epistula 29	395[b]
Sermo 252	18 April 396 (Good Friday)[c]
Confessiones 6.2.2	397–400[d]
Sermo 313G (= Erfurt 6)	14 September 397–401[e]
Contra Faustum 20.21	400–402[f]
Sermo 361	December 403[g]
Sermo 311	14 September 405[h]
De ciuitate Dei 8.27	416[i]

a J. Anoz, 'Cronología de la producción agustiniana', *Augustinus* 47 (2002), 229–312 (246).
b Ibidem.
c Anoz, 'Cronología', 284.
d Anoz, 'Cronología', 233.
e I. Schiller et al., 'Sechs neue Augustinuspredigten. Teil 1 mit Edition dreier Sermones', *Wiener Studien* 121 (2008), 227–284 (282).
f Anoz, 'Cronología', 241.
g Anoz, 'Cronología', 292.
h Anoz, 'Cronología', 288.
i Anoz, 'Cronología', 236.

6 Place and Form of the Commemoration Meal in Augustine's Discussion

In the texts in Table 6.1 the commemoration meals in honour of the martyrs take place within the walls of a church (*Epistula* 22, *Epistula* 29), or in the vicinity of the martyr's grave, *ad memorias sanctorum* (*Confessiones* 6.2.2, *Contra Faustum* 20.21, *De ciuitate Dei* 8.27), specifically in the church containing Cyprian's grave (*Sermo* 311.5).

In many instances Augustine mentions the elements of eating, drinking, drunkenness, and dance. In his opinion, this order is consecutive, since drunkenness follows drinking and drunkenness leads to dancing. Augustine considers the latter two things objectionable excesses, comparable to the theatre, which he also regards as a damnable practice.[26] Still, Augustine implicitly

26 *Sermo* 252.4: *Et talia plerumque seditionibus quaerunt in ecclesiis, qualia solent in theatris.* PL 38.1174.

exonerates his mother from these excesses in his narrative of Monica's commemoration meal in Milan, where she offered a small cup of very watery wine (*Confessiones* 6.2.2[27]). The use of the diminutive *pocillum* and the superlative *aquatissimo* may be interpreted as implicit praise for Monica's sobriety.

7 Deceased Family Members

According to van der Meer,[28] Augustine permitted the commemoration meal in the family circle, the *agape*, but opposed the meal in commemoration of the martyrs in the churches and at their grave sites. Is it true that Augustine in his evaluation of the commemoration meal in fact distinguishes between the commemoration of a deceased relative and the public ecclesiastical practice of services celebrating the anniversaries of the deaths of martyrs? Two of the texts listed in Table 6.1 explicitly discuss the commemoration of a relative: *Sermo* 361.6.6 and *Epistula* 22.6.[29]

The letter was written to Aurelius, shortly after Augustine became a priest in Hippo Regius and Aurelius a bishop in Carthage. Augustine urges him to put a stop to the meals in honour of the martyrs. He uses the verb *dissuaderi*: it has to be advised against. As regards the meal in commemoration of the deceased family members, *oblationes pro spiritibus dormientium*, Augustine proposes that it be transformed into giving alms to the poor, a ritual which he believes is actually helpful to the deceased, *quas uere aliquid adiuuare credendum est*. This may be food or money: 'If any person wishes from religious motives to make an offering in coin, let him distribute it to the poor on the spot', Augustine recommends in *Epistula* 22.6.[30]

In *Sermo* 361.6.6 Augustine mentions *parentare*, celebrating the festival of the *parentalia*. This sermon is about the resurrection of the dead. In section 6 Augustine discusses the alleged usefulness of offering food to the dead. This is already ridiculed in the Bible: '*tamquam si epulas', inquit, 'mortuo circumponas'* (Sir 30:18).[31] We do not read that the patriarchs celebrated the *parentalia*,

27 *Confessionum libri XIII*, L. Verheijen (ed.), CCSL 27 (Turnhout 1990), 74.

28 Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, 525–526.

29 Rebillard, '*Nec deserere*' 104 also looks at *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 48.1.15, a sermon about the vanity of wealth in the afterlife. This text does not discuss the commemoration meal as such, but argues that it was useless in the case of the rich man in Luke 16.

30 *si quis pro religione aliquid pecuniae offerre uoluerit, in praesenti pauperibus eroget. Epistulae* I–LV, Kl.D. Daur (ed.), CCSL 31 (Turnhout 2004), 52–57 (55). Translation J.H. Baxter, LCL 239, 49.

31 *Sermones*, PL 39.1601. 'As if you place offerings of food upon a grave'. Translation NRSV, adapted.

Augustine remarks, wondering how it is possible that Christians now celebrate this festival. In order to make sense of this, he quotes Tobit 4:18: *Frange panem tuum, et effunde uinum tuum super sepulcra iustorum, et ne tradas eum iniustis*.[32] Christians may offer bread and wine to the deceased, but only to the believers among them, the *iusti*. Augustine bases this distinction on the Pauline verse: *iustus ex fide uiuit*.[33] This combination of texts may be interpreted as follows: 'The deceased Christian is alive (*uide* Paul) and therefore a Christian may offer him food and wine. Only in this case a Christian may perform the ritual of the *parentalia* in line with ecclesiastical doctrine (*religiose*).'

Saxer, when discussing Augustine's use of Sir 30:18 and Tob 4:18 in *Sermo* 361, speaks of 'une gêne certaine de la part d'Augustin'.[34] On the authority of the Bible, Augustine has to allow the offerings to the dead, while he himself has chosen to oppose it. He has two reasons for his attitude: the excesses which result from drinking, and the abhorrence of non-Christian habits interfering with Christian commemoration services. Saxer does not make clear, however, where in *Sermo* 361.6.6 Augustine shows any sign of reluctance to accept this ritual. In his interpretation of *Sermo* 361.6.6, Augustine's rhetorical skill in combining scriptural quotations remains underexposed. Augustine offers an interpretation of Tob 4:18 with reference to Rom 1:17 and in this way creates scope for a non-Christian ritual within his Christian community. An important aspect of Augustine's openness here is the fact that *Sermo* 361.6.6 is about *parentare* and therefore concerns the deceased family members, not the martyrs. Earlier in 361.6.6, he mentions several relations: the preacher concentrates on the commemoration of the father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and other relatives: *pater, auus, proauus*; *parentes nostri aut cari aut propinqui*.

As appears from the letters and sermon discussed in this section, Augustine believes the *parentalia* need to be transformed from food for the deceased into nourishment for the living poor, while the only way in which Augustine can defend giving physical food to the deceased is with a rhetorical appeal to Paul: *iustus ex fide uiuit* (Rom 1:17). As will be discussed in the next section, Augustine disapproves of sacrificing to the martyrs, since this would—wrongly—suggest that the martyrs are venerated as gods.

32 Ibidem 1602. 'Break your bread and pour your wine over the graves of the righteous, but do not share them with the unjust.' Translation by the author.

33 Ibidem. Rom 1:17: 'The righteous lives by faith.' Translation by the author.

34 Saxer, *Morts, martyrs, reliques*, 137.

8 The Commemoration Meal in Honour of the Martyrs

In *Epistula* 22.5–6 Augustine explains to bishop Aurelius how to deal with eating and drinking within the context of the commemoration of the martyrs. The forms of the verbs used, such as the gerundive and the adhortative subjunctive, give this text a prescriptive character. For instance, the habit of lavishly drinking and eating on the grave of the martyrs 'has to be banned, not harshly, but as Scripture puts it, in the spirit of gentleness and meekness': ***auferendum est*** *non aspere, sed, sicut scriptum est, in spiritu lenitatis et mansuetudinis* (*Ep.*22.5).[35]

Unlike *Epistula* 22, letter 29 is for the greater part a narrative text, in which Augustine tells his friend Alypius, who has become bishop of Thagaste, how, as a priest, he convinced his audience in the church of Hippo to put an end to the commemoration meals in honour of Leontius, a third-century bishop of Hippo and founder of the *basilica Leontiniana* that had been built there. Possibly Leontius died a martyr during the Diocletianic persecution. It is clear that he was venerated as a saint in both the Catholic and the Donatist Church in Africa.[36] Saxer characterizes letter 29 as 'un bulletin de victoire'.[37] Augustine narrates how he won the victory by using sermons and psalms as an alternative for the licentious commemorative celebrations. He also explained to his audience in the church why this ritual had been allowed in earlier times: to keep the Christian faith easily accessible. According to Augustine, it is now time for his fellow Christians in Hippo to follow the example of the faithful in the churches overseas, where the commemoration meals are not allowed.

In *Confessiones* 6.2.2 we read about an example from overseas. Having arrived in Milan in 385, Monica sets out quite innocently to commemorate a martyr by bringing him a basket full of porridge, bread and wine, when she is stopped at the entrance to the memorial. According to the porter, bishop Ambrose did not allow this.

In this instance it is Ambrose who prohibits the ritual, or rather, instructs the porter to forbid it. It is important to note that this entire passage is part of a larger narrative unit dealing with Monica's love for Ambrose, which in

35 *Epistulae* I–LV, Daur (ed.), CCSL 31, 54. Translation Baxter, LCL 239, 47–49, adapted. Shortly after *Epistula* 22 was written, a council was held in Hippo in 393. Canon 29 may have enhanced Augustine's opposition, since it testifies to the fact that bishops and clergymen were forbidden to eat and drink in the churches and were under instruction to prohibit the people from eating in the church as well. Cf. C. Munier (ed.), *Concilia Africae 345–525*, CCSL 259 (Turnhout 1974), 41.

36 Cf. S. Lancel, *Saint Augustine* (London 2002), 238; 506 n. 12.

37 Saxer, *Morts, martyrs, reliques*, 141.

turns serves Monica's wish that Augustine be converted to Christianity. Monica loved Ambrose like an angel (6.1.1). Accordingly (*itaque*), she immediately took his instruction seriously. She would never have done so if the instruction had been someone else's instead of Ambrose's, whom she loved so dearly. This love presented in ring composition was based on Monica's wish for Augustine's salvation:

> **diligebat** autem illum uirum sicut angelum dei (6.1.1)[38]
> (…)
> **itaque** cum ad memorias sanctorum, sicut in Africa solebat, pultes et panem et merum attulisset atque ab ostiario prohiberetur, ubi hoc episcopum uetuisse cognouit, tam pie atque oboedienter amplexa est, ut ipse mirarer, quam facile accusatrix potius consuetudinis suae quam disceptatrix illius prohibitionis effecta sit (6.2.2)[39]
> (…)
> sed tamen uidetur mihi (…) non facile fortasse de hac amputanda consuetudine matrem meam fuisse cessuram, si ab alio prohiberetur, quem non sicut Ambrosium **diligebat**. **quem propter salutem meam maxime diligebat**, eam uero ille propter eius religiosissimam conuersationem.[40]

In *Confessiones* 6.2.2 Augustine uses Ambrose's opposition to the commemoration meals as an element in the narrative, serving the purpose of his conversion to Christianity. In many sermons, in a non-narrative setting, Augustine the bishop immediately advises his audience against the abundancy of the commemoration meals and recommends imitating the martyrs instead, while pointing to the alternative of spiritual nourishment.[41] In *Sermo* 313G.2 Augustine compares the luxury of those participating in the celebrations to

38 *Confessiones*, Verheijen (ed.), CCSL 27, 74. 'She loved that man as an angel of God'. Translation by H. Chadwick, *Confessions* (Oxford 2008[3]), 91.

39 Ibidem. 'In accordance with my mother's custom in Africa, she had taken to the memorial shrines of the saints cakes and bread and wine, and was forbidden by the janitor. When she knew that the bishop was responsible for the prohibition, she accepted it in so devout and docile a manner that I myself was amazed how easy it was for her to find fault with her own custom rather than to dispute his ban.' Translation Chadwick, *Confessions*, 91.

40 Ibidem 74–75. 'Yet it seems to me (…) that she would not have yielded easily on the prohibition of this custom if the ban had come from another whom she did not love like Ambrose. For the sake of my salvation she was wholly devoted to him, and he loved her for her deeply religious pattern of life.' Translation Chadwick, *Confessions*, 92.

41 *Sermo* 328.9.6; 335A.3; 339; *In Johannis euangelium tractatus* 84.1.

the agony of martyrdom in a wordplay typical for the language in his sermons. Two forms of the verb *persequi* and two more or less rhyming nouns form a contrast: *non persequamur martyres calicibus, quos pagani sunt persecuti lapidibus*.[42] Augustine also offers alternatives for the consequences of drinking wine, such as dancing in abandon. In *Sermo* 311 he suggests an alternative dance based on the singing of psalms (see below, section 9.) In *Contra Faustum* 20.21, which was written between these two sermons 313G and 361, celebration in the vicinity of martyrs' memorials is mentioned without disapproval and drunkenness is put into perspective. In the author's view, the celebration serves three goals: stimulating the imitation of the martyrs, participating in the martyrs' merits, and securing the martyrs' support by praying: *populus autem christianus memorias martyrum religiosa sollemnitate concelebrat, et ad excitandam imitationem, et ut meritis eorum consocietur, atque orationibus adiuuetur*.[43] While celebrating, Christians should not think that they are sacrificing to the martyrs themselves rather than to God: *ita tamen ut nulli martyrum, sed ipsi Deo martyrum, quamuis in memoriis martyrum, constituamus altaria*.[44]

In the same section, Augustine states that coming home inebriated from a commemoration is wrong, a sign of weakness, but it is still better than sacrificing to the martyrs even in a sober state: *longe quippe minoris peccati est ebrium redire a martyribus quam uel ieiunum sacrificare martyribus*.[45]

In *De ciuitate Dei* 8.27 Augustine delivers the same message: commemoration meals are not sacrifices to the martyrs, as if these were gods. Augustine vigorously resists that idea, because it would leave open the suggestion to non-Christians that the martyr cult was a form of idolatry. He accepts the fact that Christians organize commemoration meals, but puts this habit into perspective by subtly remarking that 'better Christians do not join in this practice': *quod*

42 Schiller et al. (eds), 'Sechs neue Augustinuspredigten', 284. 'Let us not pursue the martyrs with drinking cups, who were pursued by the pagans with stones.' Translation by the author.

43 *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, J. Zycha (ed.), CSEL 25.1 (Vienna 1891), 249–797 (562). 'The Christian people, however, celebrate the memorials of the martyrs with religious solemnity both in order to encourage the imitation of them and in order to be united with their merits and helped by their prayers.' Translation R. Teske, *Answers to Faustus, a Manichean* (*Contra Faustum Manichaeum*), The works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, Vol. 1.20 (New York 2007), 279.

44 Ibidem. 'In such a way, however, that we erect altars to none of the martyrs but to the God of the martyrs, although at the memorials of the martyrs.' Translation Teske, *Answers to Faustus*, 279.

45 Ibidem 564.

quidem a christianis melioribus non fit.[46] This remark is an addition to the same message in *Contra Faustum* 20.21.

We may conclude from the collection of texts discussed in this section that there is no continuous chronological development from strong prohibition to a more lenient point of view. In the sermons and letters discussed, Augustine strongly opposes the commemoration meal in honour of the martyrs, but he is not so firm in the polemical and apologetic works. Clearly, he does not appreciate this ritual. In his view there is a better alternative to drunkenness: Christians should take nourishment for the mind and give their plenty away to the poor. The next section continues with a discussion of Augustine's use of scriptural arguments in his presentation of this alternative.

9 Augustine's Arguments for Dismissing the Commemoration Meals

In both the letters and the sermons, Augustine takes Scripture as a reference point for evaluating the commemoration meal. In *Epistula* 22.6, towards the end of his argument against this ritual, Augustine proposes offering the poor something to eat instead of feeding the dead. At this stage he harks back to the arguments he has derived from the Bible (*de scripturis*) earlier in this letter, specifically to Rom 13:13–14.

The letter as a whole is driven by the text of Rom 13:13–14: *non in comissationibus et ebrietatibus, non in cubilibus et impudicitiis, non in contentione et dolo; sed induite uos dominum Iesum Christum et carnis curam ne feceritis in concupiscentiis*.[47] The same verses struck Augustine like an oracle in the *tolle, lege* scene in *Confessiones* 8.12.29, as Jensen remarks.[48] Of the three types of misbehaviour mentioned in this text (greed/drunkenness; sexual immorality; rivalry/envy) Augustine only discusses the middle one briefly: it regards those who are to blame for sexual misconduct. They are not allowed to participate in the Eucharist. The other two are discussed more elaborately, and Augustine shows that drunkenness is another reason to exclude people from the Eucharist. The catalogue of misbehaviour in Rom 13:13–14 is comparable to another Pauline text which Augustine quotes in the other letter discussed in

46 *De ciuitate Dei*, B. Dombart and A. Kalb (eds), CCSL 47 (Turnhout 1955), 248. Translation by the author.

47 *Epistula* 22, Daur (ed.), CCSL 31, 53. 'Not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.' Translation NRSV.

48 Jensen, 'Dining with the dead', 140.

this paper, *Epistula* 29. In *Epistula* 29.5 Augustine quotes 1 Cor 5:11, which also mentions drunkenness in a series of unacceptable behaviours: *si quis frater nominetur* (…) *ebriosus* (…)*: cum eius modi nec cibum sumere*.[49] Augustine also quotes this last sentence in *Epistula* 22.3: *cum talibus nec panem edere*.[50] Possibly Augustine was aiming in *Epistula* 22.6 at the Donatists, whom he mentions at the end of *Epistula* 29: while psalms are sung in his church, elsewhere the sounds of the Donatist festivity can be heard: ***in haereticorum basilica*** *audiebamus ab eis solita conuiuia celebrata*.[51]

In his sermons, too, Augustine warns against drunkenness as a consequence of taking part in the commemoration meals. In *Sermo* 313G.2 he recommends that his audience should eat the nourishment of the inner man instead of weighing down the heart by intoxication and drunkenness: *non grauentur corda uestra in crapula et ebrietate* (Luke 21:34).[52]

In *Sermo* 311 drunkenness is implicitly identified as the source of dancing to abandon in the memorial church of Cyprian of Carthage, who died a martyr under Valerian, on 14 September 258. Augustine claims that although the times for that kind of dancing may be over for his community in Hippo, and although he has offered them another kind of song, his audience still lacks a new kind of dancing: *cantauimus uobis, et non saltastis* (Matt 11:17).[53] He invites his audience to choose a dance in harmony with the song he is about to recite, a quotation from 1 John 2:15–16:

> dico canticum nostrum: nolite diligere mundum, neque ea quae in mundo sunt.
>
> quisquis dilexerit mundum, non est caritas patris in illo: quia omnia quae in mundo sunt, concupiscentia carnis est, et concupiscentia oculorum, et ambitio saeculi, quae non est ex patre, sed ex mundo est.[54]

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49 *Epistulae* I–LV, Daur (ed.), CCSL 31, 98–105 (100). 'Anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is (…) greedy (…) Do not even eat with such a one.' Translation NRSV.

50 Ibidem 53. 'With such an one not even to eat bread.' Translation Baxter, LCL 239, 45.

51 *Epistula* 29.11, ibidem 104. 'We heard in the church of the heretics the noise of the usual feasting that they were celebrating.' Translation Baxter, LCL 239, 89. For the location of this Donatist church, see Lancel, *Saint Augustine*, 497 n. 32.

52 Schiller et al. (eds), 'Sechs neue Augustinuspredigten', 284.

53 *Sermones*, PL 38.1415. 'We sang for you, and you did not dance.' Translation NRSV, adapted.

54 Ibidem 1416. *Sermo* 311.6.6, including a quotation from 1 John 2:15–16: 'I will tell you my song: Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world.' Translation 1 John 2:15–16 NRSV.

This scriptural quotation contains the contrast between *concupiscentia carnis* and *caritas patris* ('desire of the flesh' and 'love of the Father'), a contrast which also plays a part at the end of *Sermo* 311, and in many of the other texts about the commemoration meal. Drinking and drunkenness have to make room for love and charity in the scriptural sense. Other, rhyming contrasts enhance this plea: no *motus membrorum*, but *congruentia morum*: *facite uos congruentia morum, quod faciunt saltatores motu membrorum* (*Sermo* 311.7.7).[55] No *cupiditas*, but *caritas*: *euome cupiditatem, bibe caritatem* (*Sermo* 311.15.13).[56]

Love, in this case *dilectio*, is also addressed in Augustine's polemic with Faustus' *Capitula*. In this text, in which Augustine does not use any scriptural verses in reference to the commemoration meal, the author refutes the assertion by Faustus that Christians venerate other gods beside the Holy Trinity, that is to say the martyrs. According to Augustine, this incorrect notion is based on the misunderstanding that the martyrs receive sacrifices on the altars close to their memorials. Augustine states that the faithful do not venerate the martyrs by offering these sacrifices, but instead they commemorate their devotion to God in order to imitate an attitude of love and fellowship:

> colimus ergo martyres eo cultu dilectionis et societatis, quo et in hac uita coluntur sancti homines Dei, quorum cor ad talem pro euangelica ueritate passionem paratum esse sentimus.[57]

10 Transformation: From Commemoration Meal to Eucharist and Giving of Alms

Various ecclesiastical rituals are supposed to have been transformations of the ancient commemoration meals, the most conspicuous of which is the Eucharist. As early as the third century this ritual is mentioned as a substitute for the commemoration meal.[58] From the fourth century onward, chapels and

55 Ibidem. 'See that you all do, by keeping time with your morals, what dancers do by keeping time with their bodies and their feet.' Translation E. Hill, *Sermons*, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, Vol. 3.9, Sermons 306–340A, On the Saints (New York 1994), 77.

56 Ibidem 1419. 'Vomit out cupidity, drink in charity.' Translation E. Hill, *Sermons*, 77.

57 *Contra Faustum* 20.21, Zycha (ed.), CSEL 25.1, 562; 'We reverence the martyrs, therefore, with that cult of love and fellowship by which we reverence in this life holy men and women of God whose heart we see is ready for great suffering on behalf of the truth of the gospel.' Translation Teske, *Answers to Faustus*, 279.

58 Cf. Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, 447.

churches are built on the graves of the martyrs. As a consequence the place of burial converges with the location of the Eucharist.[59]

Giving alms to the poor is another transformation of the commemoration meal, and one encouraged by Augustine, as has been discussed above. In *De ciuitate Dei* 8.27, Augustine mentions both of these rituals in the same breath. Some Christians take food to the graves of the martyrs and eat this or give it to the poor. Augustine opposes the view that this commemoration meal is meant to be a sacrifice to the martyrs. He states that Christians know of only one sacrifice, which is also celebrated at the memorials of the martyrs: *unum quod etiam illic offertur sacrificium christianorum*.[60] This phrase probably refers to the Eucharist.

In *Epistula* 22.6 Augustine recommends that the giving of food or alms to the poor takes place in the presence of the deceased, which means at the graveside: *in praesenti pauperibus eroget*.[61] In several later works Augustine enumerates a fixed series of three commemoration rituals which he believes can benefit the deceased: prayer, the Eucharist, and the giving of alms to the poor.[62] These are the rites with which Christians can imitate the martyrs in love and charity while also providing care for their beloved family members after death.

11 Conclusion

The examination of the Augustinian sources listed in section 5 does not reveal a clear chronological development in Augustine's discussion of the commemoration meal. Rather, a difference may be observed between sermons and letters composed for an ecclesiastical audience on the one hand, and texts written for an external audience on the other. There is a clear difference in tone between the sermons and letters discussed, both written for Augustine's fellow Christians, and the writings addressed to an outside audience. The sermons are

59 Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, 453.

60 *De ciuitate Dei*, Dombart and Kalb (eds), CCSL 47, 248.

61 Cf. n. 30 above.

62 Cf. *De cura pro mortuis gerenda* 18.22, written c. 423: *non existimemus ad mortuos, pro quibus curam gerimus, peruenire, nisi quod pro eis siue altaris, siue orationum, siue elemosynarum sacrificiis sollemniter supplicamus*. 'Let us conclude that nothing reaches the deceased, for whom we have to care, except our solemn supplications in the form of the sacrifice of the Mass, prayers or almsgiving.' *De cura pro mortuis gerenda ad Paulinum episcopum*, J. Zycha (ed.), CSEL 41 (Vienna 1900) 619–660 (658). Cf. P.J. Rose, *A Commentary on Augustine's De cura pro mortuis gerenda: Rhetoric in Practice*, Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology 20 (Leiden 2013), 562–564.

characterized by a more fervent tone, achieved by using rhetorical figures such as rhyme and wordplay. The polemical and apologetic texts are suffused with a more liberal spirit.

Earlier scholars, including van der Meer, stated that Augustine rejects the celebration of the commemoration meal in honour of the martyrs, whereas he allows this ritual for deceased family members. A careful reading of *Sermo* 361.6.6 shows, however, that Augustine needs all his versatility in Scripture to create scope for the commemoration meal in honour of deceased family members. As regards the supposed difference in approach to the martyrs and the ordinary deceased, the texts discussed in this paper show that in both cases Augustine proposes a transformation of the physical meal into either the giving of alms to the poor or a focus on spiritual nourishment. In the sermons and letters discussed, Augustine fights against the excesses of drunkenness and the resultant behaviour, which he regards as licentious. Instead, he proposes to his fellow Christians that they should invest in the spiritual food offered by Scripture,[63] in feeding the poor,[64] and in imitating the love and loyalty shown by the martyrs.[65]

The distinction between the commemoration of the martyrs and that of family members is relevant in Augustine's discussion with non-ecclesiastical opponents who supposed that the commemoration meal was a sacrifice to the martyrs, as if these represented lower gods. This discussion appears in *Contra Faustum* 20.21 and *De ciuitate Dei* 8.27, two texts written in diverse phases of Augustine's life as an author. In both of these texts Augustine denies that Christians sacrifice to the martyrs as if they were gods. In these two sources it seems to be more important to Augustine to contest this notion than to ban the excessive martyr cult as such. The latter is a mission he undertakes in several sermons and letters addressed to his fellow Christians.

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63 Cf. *Sermo* 311.15.13; 313G.2; *Epistula* 29.11.

64 Cf. *Epistula* 22.6; *Confessiones* 6.2.2.

65 Cf. *Contra Faustum* 20.21.

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CHAPTER 7

Ideas of the Afterlife in Christian Grave Inscriptions and Their Context in Contemporaneous Christian Sepulchral Culture in Rome

Jutta Dresken-Weiland

The hope of and faith in an afterlife was an important component of the new religion of Christianity. We may ask how this belief in life after death can be discerned in grave inscriptions of—more or less—ordinary people decorating their graves. How did early Christians, living within the Roman Empire, express their hope and faith to contemporaries or to posterity? In this article, I hope to clarify which notions concerning life and death were important, and how Christians negotiated both pre-existing and new ways of expressing their faith in a commemorative context. To realize this aim, I will present a survey that displays the prominence of certain themes related to matters of life and death. Next, I will consider three inscriptions that reflect on one such theme, namely, the Last Judgement. Subsequently, I will discuss the surprising fact that inscriptions relatively rarely refer to the afterlife, and I will propose several ideas that aim to explain this. I will then shift my focus from word to image in order to analyse the role of visual representation: how might images express faith in life after death? The answer to this question leads to my conclusion.

But first I will briefly address the earliest sources that reflect my theme. In catacomb grave inscriptions from the beginning of the third century, labelled as 'epigraphy of Christians', salutations like *pax, pax*, *pax tecum*, εἰρήνη, εἰρήνη σοι or εἰρήνη σου are used beside the name of the dead.[1] This means that they reference the common greeting of the Christian community, which goes back to the Hebrew *shalom* and to the peace greeting passed down in the New Testament. Here, these salutations may be understood as greetings of the bereaved to their deceased.[2] They presuppose that it is a pleasant and positive condition

1 C. Carletti, *Epigrafia dei cristiani in occidente dal III al VII secolo. Ideologia e prassi* (Bari 2008), 31.

2 J. Dresken-Weiland, 'Tod und Jenseits in antiken christlichen Grabinschriften', in J. Dresken-

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in which the dead person has arrived. Gradually, phrases with a clearer eschatological significance appear in addition to *pax* and εἰρήνη: *in pace* and ἐν εἰρήνῃ, the latter describing the actual status of the deceased as tranquil and quiet. These expressions are followed by phrases like *in refrigerio et in pace*, *dormit in pace*, *pax tecum in deo*.[3]

Other statements referring more clearly and in greater depth to the content of the Christian faith and the afterlife do not appear until the 4th century—with a few earlier exceptions—, thus two or three generations after the introduction of the 'epigraphy of Christians'. It is to these that I now turn.

1 Frequency of Themes Referring to Death and the Afterlife in the Early Christian Grave Inscriptions of the Roman World

I included a survey of contents referring to the afterlife in another publication and I present it here again, because themes and priorities are important to gain insight into the context of sepulchral culture.[4] The table below refers to a time span from c. 200 CE to the end of the sixth century; in Spain, some inscriptions even date to the seventh century.

Themes	Rome	Italy	Gaul	Germania	Hispania	Africa	Egypt, Nubia	Syria, Palest.	Asia Minor	Balkans
References to eternal life	95	43	67	6	12	22	51	5	25	20
Resurrection	23	13	29	0	7	4	1	1	14	13
Communion with God/ Christ	159	45	21	2	14	24	20	6	24	20
Communion with the saints	44	28	14	3	5	7	22	5	9	13

Weiland, A. Angerstorfer, A. Merkt, *Himmel, Paradies, Schalom. Tod und Jenseits in antiken christlichen und jüdischen Grabinschriften* (Regensburg 2012), 77.

3 *ICUR* IX 24906, 25455; *ICUR* IX 25350; *ICUR* IX 25332; Carletti, *Epigrafia*, 35.—To "refrigerium" see J. Dresken-Weiland, 'Vorstellungen von Tod und Jenseits in den frühchristlichen Grabinschriften des 3.–6. Jhs. in Rom, Italien und Afrika', *Römische Quartalschrift* 101 (2006), 289–312, (295 f.); J. Dresken-Weiland, *Bild, Grab und Wort. Untersuchungen zu Jenseitsvorstellungen von Christen des 3. und 4. Jahrhunderts* (Regensburg 2010), 182, 194 f.

4 J. Dresken-Weiland, 'Vorstellungen von Tod und Jenseits in den Grabinschriften der Oikumene', *Antiquité Tardive* 15 (2007), 285–302, (286), see also Dresken-Weiland, *Himmel*, 82.

(*cont.*)

Themes	Rome	Italy	Gaul	Germania	Hispania	Africa	Egypt, Nubia	Syria, Palest.	Asia Minor	Balkans
Intercession by the deceased	29	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Intercession for the deceased	6	2	1	0	2	0	0	1	5	4
Invocation of God	7	10	50	0	1	1	25	27	35	21
Other wishes for the deceased	71	4	0	0	0	5	0	2	4	1
Refrigerium	45	6	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
Judgement	4	8	2	0	1	0	0	3	13	7
Merits	27	9	33	6	5	9	3	1	8	5
Grief and mourning	76	41	28	3	7	13	1	1	26	9

The following emphases seem to be the most important:

a. In both East and West, an important theme is communion with God or Christ, which plays a role in early inscriptions in the West, and we find references to eternal life, although these only appear from the fourth century onwards.

b. In the East, invocations of God are found, which show the affectionate interest in and the concern of the bereaved for the eternal fate of their deceased; the *refrigerium*, frequent in the West in the third and fourth centuries, is completely absent here.

c. Resurrection and judgement are rarely selected as a central theme, and when they appear, it is in the inscriptions of clerics. However, in the East, both laymen and clerics use the word κοιμητήριον for a Christian cemetery, which implies a belief in resurrection.

d. The forgiveness of sins, a central theological theme, is very rarely mentioned in inscriptions and hardly ever with respect to the afterlife. Obviously, it was not a relevant theme for the Christians of antiquity in the sepulchral sphere.

We rarely find statements referring to central theological issues such as resurrection, which is one of the core aspects of the Christian faith, or judgement. Theological terms and concepts, and more complex theological reasoning rarely enter the language of grave inscriptions. This is also true for baptism, which marks the first step towards eternal life. It is only mentioned in inscriptions when it was administered in the hour of death. The theological technical term *baptisma* or the corresponding verbs *baptizare* or *tinctio* and *tingere* are seldom used, and allusions in poetic paraphrase to the administration of the

sacrament are preferred.[5] In the metrical inscription for the *praefectus urbi* Sextus Petronius Probus, who died at the end of the fourth century, his baptism, which was probably administered on his deathbed, is referred to as an ablution in the Jordan.[6]

2 Examples of the Use of Theological Terms in Grave Inscriptions: Inscriptions from the City of Rome which Mention the Last Judgement

The use of theological terms and references to confessional statements of Christian faith can be found in inscriptions composed by theologically educated laypeople or by members of the clergy. Thus the Last Judgement is only mentioned in four inscriptions from the city of Rome: about 304 by Severus, a deacon of pope Marcellinus; in the third quarter of the fourth century by a well-to-do layman, who composed an inscription which decorates a marble sarcophagus; in the fifth century by the archdeacon Sabinus;[7] and in the sixth century by the presbyter Victor.[8] To show the material and cultural context of these inscriptions, the first three of these will be presented in greater detail. They contain three particular situations.

2.1 *The Inscription of Severus for His Daughter Severa*[9]

> A two-room suite with arched tombs and a lightwell, with his pope Marcellinus' permission, this deacon Severus constructed a quiet resting place in peace for himself and his family. There the sweet limbs will be preserved in sleep for the Maker and the Judge for a long time. Severa, sweet child to parents and servants, died a virgin on 25th January. The Lord let

5 Dresken-Weiland, *Himmel*, 83.

6 Dresken-Weiland, *Himmel*, 119 f.

7 Dresken-Weiland, *Himmel*, 105–107; 137–139.

8 *ICUR* I 3847= VIII 20739.

9 *ICUR* IV 10183: *Cubiculum dup*[*l*]*ex cum arcosoliis et lu*[*m*]*inare/iussu p*(*a*)*p*(*ae*) *sui Marcellini diaconus iste/ Severus fecit mansionem in pace quietam/ sibi suisque memor quo membra dulcia somno/ per loncum* (*!*) *tempus factori et iudici servet/ Severa dulcis parentibus et*(*!*) *famulisque/ reddidit VIII Febr*(*u*)*arias virco*(*!*) *Kalendas/quam dom*(*inu*)*s nasci mira sapientia et arte/iusserat in carnem quod corpus pace quietum/hic est sepultum donec resurgat ab ipso/ quique animam rapuit spiritu sancto suo/castam pudicam et inviolabile semper/quamque iterum dom*(*inu*)*s spiritali gloria reddet. /quae vixit annos VIIII et XI menses/XV quoque dies sic est translata de saec*(*u*)*lo*.

> her be born in the flesh full of wisdom and skill, and her body is buried here in quiet and peace until it rises from here. The Lord by his Holy Spirit took her chaste, pure and ever inviolable soul and he will restore it again to spiritual glory. She lived nine years and eleven months and fifteen days. Thus she was taken from the world.[10]

This inscription (Fig. 7.1) belongs to the oldest Christian verse inscriptions.[11] It is noteworthy for three reasons. First of all, it is the oldest inscription that speaks of resurrection. The text expresses the idea that the body of Severa resides in the grave and that, when she died, her soul was separated from the body and that it will return to the body when the resurrection takes place. Secondly, in this inscription we find the oldest reference to the Last Judgement because it mentions the 'Maker and Judge'. Thirdly, this inscription is the first to designate the bishop of Rome as *papa*. The phrase *iussu p*(*a*)*p*(*ae*) *sui Marcellini* means that Marcellinus gave permission to build the *cubiculum*,[12] i.e. that he was allowed to decide about the assignment of burial spaces in this part of the cemetery.

The family's sepulchre, consisting of two rooms, endowed with *arcosolia* and a lightwell,[13] is located in the 'Region of Gaius and Eusebius' in the immediate vicinity of the graves of martyrs and popes.[14] The marble of the inscription is a reused open-worked barrier screen, which is proof of particular expenditure because its form is rare (Fig. 7.2).

2.2 *Inscription of Gaudentius for His Wife Bassa*

The inscription (Fig. 7.3)[15] can be found on a sarcophagus discovered in fragments bricked into a wall, which was constructed, probably still in antiquity, to secure a landslip in the catacomb. It is not possible to decide whether the

10 English translation: W. Wischmeyer, 'The sociology of pre-Constantine Christianity', in A. Kreider, *The Origins of Christendom in the West* (Edinburgh 2001), 139, with corrections by the author.

11 Carletti, *Epigrafia*, 39.

12 G.B. de Rossi, *La Roma sotteranea cristiana*, vol. I (Rome 1864), 208; vol. III (Rome 1877), 47.

13 For the original location of the plate and for the finding place, see De Rossi, *Roma sotteranea*, III 45–49 pl. 5.

14 For the exact location see L. Spera, *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma dall'antichità al medioevo* (Rome 1999), 131.

15 *Bassa caret membris vivens per saecula Xpo /aeterias secuta domos ac regna piorum/ solvere corporeos meruit pulc*(*h*)*errima nodos/stelliger accepit polus hanc et sidera caeli/ aetatisq*(*ue*) *citae properans transcendere cursum/ exuvias posuit fragiles corpusq*(*ue*) *s*[*epu*]*lcro/*

sarcophagus was originally housed in a mausoleum and destroyed by the landslip, or whether it was located in a subterranean burial chamber and smashed to supply material to safeguard the catacomb:[16]

> Bassa is free of her limbs, living through the ages in Christ.
> Pursuing an ethereal home and the kingdoms of the pious,
> most beautiful, she deserved to loose the knots of the flesh.
> Star-bearing heaven and the stars of the sky have received her
> and hastening to move through the course of swift passing life,
> she has placed her fragile husk and body in the tomb.
> Worthy of respect, steadfastly trusting in the judgment of the high God,
> and attending with pure heart the God who will come,
> she has taken to herself the pleasures (and) rewards of the boundless light
> distinguished ..... and beautiful
> Gaudentius, happily look up at your wife,
> who shining brightly now in her lofty abode ...
> prevailing with renewed strength, utters such things in words:
> 'Sweet husband, most closely bound to me forever,
> drive off your tears, the noble court of heaven is pleasant,
> and it is not fitting to weep because I, a virtuous woman, have abandoned earth;
> More pre-eminent I have learned how to take hold of the pure upper air;
> in the snares of death I was able to remain alive;
> A much better life ...
> You will be saved, I confess ... the kisses of Bassa.'[17]
> She was buried on the .... and lived 22 years and ... months.

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sedula iudicio credens venerabilis al[*t*]*i/ venturumq*(*ue*) *Deum puro* [*cum*] *corde secuta/amplificae sumpsit* [*sibi gau*]*dia premia lucis/eximium* [--- *umq*]*ue* [*de*]*corem.*

Gaudenti tuam consortem suspice laetus/aeria nunc sede nitens qu[*ae ...*]*/ vi potiore valens expromit ta*[*lia ver*]*bis/ dul*[*ci*]*s in aeternum mihimet iun*[*ctissi*]*me coniux/ ex*[*c*]*ute iam lacrimas placuit bona* [*r*]*egia caeli/ nec lugere decet terras quia casta reliqu*[*i*]*/tangere sinceras didici praestantior auras/in laqueis mortis poteram rema*[*nere su*]*perstes/ vita satis melior nostros hi*[*c .....*]*actus/ sospes eris fateor u*[*..... o*]*scula Bassae/ dep*(*ositus*) *pr*(*idie*) *Kal*(*endas*) *..../qu*(*a*)*e vix*(*it*) *ann*(*nos*) *XXII m*(*enses*) *VI.*

16 Dresken-Weiland, *Himmel*, 105.

17 Translation by D. Trout, 'Borrowed Verse and Broken Narrative: Agency, Identity, and the (Bethesda) Sarcophagus of Bassa', in J. Elsner and J. Huskinson (eds), *Life, Death and Representation. Some New Work on Roman Sarcophagi* (Berlin 2011), 333–354 (337 f.).

The inscription appears on the right half of the sarcophagus and is organized in the form of an acrostichon, that is, the name of the deceased woman and of her surviving husband can be read vertically: BASSAE SUAE GAUDENTIUS. The text of the inscription contains statements which occur frequently in fourth-century texts: the spirit is separated from the body, and the soul resides with the stars. Bassa already lives in Christ and dwells in the communion of the saints. She is confident of salvation at the Last Judgement, because she followed Christ in her life; her merits pave the way for her. Her beauty is mentioned explicitly. In the second paragraph of the epitaph, her husband Gaudentius is summoned to stop mourning, because Bassa is enjoying her new existence at the heavenly court; being a virtuous woman, death did not harm her, and she passed on to a better life. As is to be expected, the text does not describe the condition in which Bassa now lives more concretely: she has reached heaven, the stars, and boundless light. According to Bassa, Gaudentius will experience a better and different condition after death; he will also be saved.

Like many other epitaphs, the inscription for Bassa is oriented to the language of Roman poetry. *Exuviae* is taken from the *Aeneid* (11.7),[18] *aetherias domos* and *regna piorum* from two carmina by Horace.[19] These terms used by Horace were adopted by Damasus (366–384), the energetic patron of the veneration of the saints in the Roman catacombs. He bound them together in a line (*aetherias petiere domos regnaque piorum*) and used them with slight variations in an epigram for Saints Felicitas and Agapitos in the catacomb of Praetextatus,[20] for Saints Felix and Philippus in the catacomb of Priscilla, and for the LXII martyrs in the Thrason catacomb.[21] The popularity of this line invited its use even in the epitaphs of 'ordinary' Christians who could afford a metric grave inscription. *Regna piorum* is also used in epitaphs for Christians who died a 'normal' death.[22] These examples show the importance of classical poetry for clerics like pope Damasus and laymen like Gaudentius. Genuinely Christian

18 For *exuviae* in Vergil *Aeneid* 4.507 see A. Bowie, 'Exuvias effigiemque. Dido, Aeneas and the Body as Sign', in D. Montserrat (ed.), *Changing Bodies, Changing Meanings. Studies on the Human Body in Antiquity* (London/New York 1998), 57–79 (73).

19 *Aeterias domos:* Horace *Carmina* 1.3.29 (*post ignem aetheria domo*); *regna piorum:* Horace *Carmina* 2.13.21–23 (*quam paene vidimus regna Proserpinae furvae et Aeacum iudicantem sedesque discripta piorum*).

20 Trout, 'Borrowed verse', 346.

21 A. Ferrua, *Epigrammata damasiana* (Vatican City 1942), 152–156 nr. 25; 179–181 nr. 39; 184–186 nr. 43; U. Reutter, *Damasus, Bischof von Rom. Leben und Werk* (Tübingen 2009), 96 nr. 43.

22 *ICUR* V 13819, VII 19744: see also *amoena piorum* in *ICUR* VII 21015.

terms such as phrases referring to hope were used only rarely to express Christian ideas of afterlife.

The sculpted left part of the sarcophagus shows one of the most popular images of early Christian art: the healing of the blind,[23] against an architectural background. Christ, accompanied by two apostles, turns towards three blind men approaching from the left. The first of these, who has already reached Christ, leans on a staff, whereas the hands of the two other men are placed on the shoulder of the man before them. The next scene shows Christ, again in the company of two apostles, healing the haemorrhoissa; very probably, the woman kneeling before Christ represents the deceased woman, who relied on Christ in life and in death. On the right, we see Christ again with an apostle walking towards a gate to the right; this iconography is taken from the group of the so-called Bethesda sarcophagi showing Christ on the way to the pond of Bethesda, where he heals sick people. On this sarcophagus, the inscription for Bassa replaces these healing scenes. The epitaph thus places the deceased and her surviving husband in Christ's presence and sphere of influence as he operates his miracles.

2.3 *Inscription for the Archdeacon Sabinus*

This inscription brings us to the years around 400 or the beginning of the fifth century. This date is indicated by the form of the letters, which imitate the famous Philocalian script created by Furius Dionysius Filocalus for pope Damasus. The epitaph was found in S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura in Rome. It has not been preserved completely. We follow here the version of the great epigraphist Antonio Ferrua:[24]

> Grave of the archdeacon Sabinus. First servant of the altar for a long time, I chose to be the gatekeeper of the holy place, because I return to the earth which is considered our origin. Here are buried the mute limbs of Sabinus. It is no help, but rather a hindrance, to remain close to the tomb of the saints, a good life is the best approach to their merits. Not with the body

23 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 247–258.

24 *ICUR* VII, 18017: *Sepulcrum Sabini archidiaconi/altaris primus per tempora multa minister/ elegi sancti ianitor esse loci/ nam terram repetens quae nostra probatur origo/ hic tumulor muta membra Sabinus humo/nil iuvat immo gravat tumulis haerere piorum/ sanctorum meritis optima vita prope est/ corpore non opus est anima tendamus ad illos /quae bene salva potest corporis esse salus/ ille ego qui voce psalmos modulatus et arte/diversis cecini verba sacrata sonis/*[*ossibus hic posui sedes in limine primo*]*/iu*[*di*]*cii tempus certus adesse cit*[*o*]*/ut dul*[*ci sonitu r*]*esonans tuba caelitu*[*s artus*]*/*[*cum vocet e terra ad*] *castra super*[*na pios*]*/* [*ma*]*rtyr Levit*[*a*]*/*[*t*]*unc quoq*[*ue*].

> but with the soul we must draw near to them; when that has well been saved it may also prove to be the salvation of the body. I, who chanted the holy words melodically and with a firm voice, in variegated tones, [placed my mortal remains in the vestibule]. The time of judgement is established, and I will arrive fast, when with sweet [sound] the trumpet resounds from heaven, [because it calls the pious from the earth to the holy camp/castle]. The martyr and deacon also at that time ----

Sabinus mentions the Last Judgement in his epitaph and reflects very critically on interment near a saint's tomb, which had become very popular since the later fourth century. People hoped that interment *ad sanctos* offered protection and security during their time of rest in the grave, and assistance from the saint(s) on Doomsday. Sabinus, who had served at the altar for a long time, suggests that only merits positively influence one's fate in the other world; it depends upon how one lived life, and not on the proximity of the dead body to the saint's grave. Sabinus chose a place in the vestibule, and he will arrive easily in the '*castra superna*' on the Day of Judgement. On this day, he imagines the physical resurrection of the flesh and great turmoil in the church of S. Lorenzo and its surroundings, when all the dead rise from their graves that are placed densely side by side, and move to the exits of the church.

The inscription illustrates how sought-after the places near the grave of Lawrence must have been; Sabinus, however, seems a sensible and rational cleric who takes a critical view of the exaggerated tendencies of his time, confidently expecting the sound of the trumpet that indicates the end of time.

These three examples show clearly that the hope of the afterlife—here the Last Judgement—is mentioned only in passing; the themes of these epitaphs are the legitimate ownership of a respectable family grave in a good location (Severus), coping with the death of a young and beloved wife (Gaudentius), and the theological nonsense of interment near a saint's grave (Sabinus).

3 The Problem of the Rarity of Ideas of the Afterlife in Christian Grave Inscriptions

Among the 27,688 inscriptions published in the *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae*, only 456 have statements relating to eternal life, resurrection, Final Judgement, communion with God or with the saints, intercession by or for the deceased, acclamations of God or wishes for the dead (0.6%). When searching epigraphical databases for '*in pace*', the result is completely different: the Epigraphische Datenbank Heidelberg, which focuses mainly on pagan inscrip-

tions, gives 945 examples (for the whole Oikumene), and the Epigraphic Database Bari, which contains the Christian inscriptions of Rome, has 7,726 examples.[25] Although the use of statistical data is not unproblematic for inscriptions, it is clear that theological terminology is rare, whereas the unspecific '*in pace*' is found frequently. In view of the high number of burials in the Roman catacombs alone—Louis Reekmans has estimated the number at 600,000 catacomb burials[26]—(churches not included), the number of inscriptions is relatively low. To make an inscription, it would have been sufficient to use a sharp object to write on the humid plaster which was applied to the plaque when closing the grave. It seems that the 'tradition' of the 'simple' or poor graves of the Roman imperial time continued: these very often had no inscription, and people probably did not even realize they could have acted differently—if they even had somebody in their company who was able to write.

In view of the tens of thousands of inscriptions which have been preserved it is unambiguously clear that the overwhelming majority of the Christians who added an inscription to the graves of their relatives and to their own graves, did not worry about describing a positive situation after death or formulate Christian (or other) perspectives on the afterlife. They preferred to stick to general terms—such as '*in pace*'.

4 Possible Explanations for the Minor Role of Ideas of the Afterlife in Early Christian Grave Inscriptions

4.1 *Is* '**in pace**' *Sufficient?*

The easiest and most banal explanation is the following: perhaps formulations with '*in pace*' to indicate communion with God were considered to be sufficient by the Christians who used them. '*In pace*' was even compatible with ways of expression used by people who did not believe firmly in an afterlife, and for pagans who wanted to be buried near their dear ones who had become Christians. However, there are numerous other formulae, so that this explanation cannot be valid for all.

25 Epigraphic Database Heidelberg: http://edh-www.adw.uni-heidelberg.de; Epigraphic Database Bari: http://www.edb.uniba.it. Consulted on 7 July 2017.

26 Cited by N. Zimmermann, *Werkstattgruppen römischer Katakombenmalerei* (Münster 2002), 41.

4.2 *The 'Epigraphic Habit' of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries*

It is well known that the Christian epigraphic habit, with the incremental number of educated persons who turned towards Christianity, increasingly oriented itself in the course of the fourth century towards the antique tradition. As regards ideas of the afterlife, topoi from the pagan poetry tradition were often used with good grace: the separation of the soul from the body, the sojourn of the body in the grave, the habitation of the soul in heaven and near the stars. These *topoi* were used by laymen and by clerics, because they belonged to the usual standards of education and were known by all literate and erudite people. The inscription for Bassa has already been cited, and there are numerous others. For example, the inscription for Concordius, bishop of Arles in the late fourth century, includes the topical formulation that he was assumed rapidly into the star-covered court of the Almighty.[27] The consecrated virgin Manlia Daedalia also localizes Christ near the high stars, to whom she will ascend at the end of her life.[28]

Together with the adoption of motifs from 'classical' pagan poetry it can be observed that shortly after the mid-fourth century the inscriptions take on a metrical form, which becomes particularly popular thereafter.[29] The authors of Christian inscriptions probably remembered what had been in use for centuries and what had always been regarded as fitting for the genre of epitaphs: these metrical texts were garnished with some Christian terms and formulae—the latter were not always considered to be necessary and were therefore missing at times. This development towards inscriptions which adopted the traditional form and traditional *topoi* can be understood very well against the background of the composition of the Christian communities of the later fourth century. These included a higher number of educated and well-to-do persons than in the third century. Confining inscriptions to a name and perhaps an eschatological element, which was quite common in the early stages of the 'epigraphy of the Christians', was very probably no longer considered sufficient for the Christians of the later fourth century. The traditionalism of the Romans and the vital importance of education as such are well known.[30] These are

27 Dresken-Weiland, *Himmel*, 172.

28 J. Wilpert, *Die gottgeweihten Jungfrauen in den ersten Jahrhunderten der Kirche* (Freiburg 1892), 37 f.; Charles and Luce Pietri, *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire* 2,1. Italie (313–604), (Rome 1999), 528 s.v. Manlia Daedalia.

29 Such later inscriptions are dated to, for instance, the years 363 (*ICUR* I 1426, VII 17443) and 368 (*ICUR* X 27296).

30 See for example G. Agosti, 'Paideia classica e fede religiosa. Annotazioni sul linguaggio dei carmini epigrafici tardoantichi', in *Cahiers du centre Gustave-Glotz* 21 (2010), 329–353.

evident in the inscriptions written after the middle of the fourth century. Possibly the traditional and long-established conventions of the genre, the use of well-known images, metrics, and allusions to the Roman poetry of the (mostly early) imperial age were what the people who commissioned the inscriptions wanted. Such texts were probably considered to be fashionable, both by the pagans, who did not want Christian references on their graves, and by the Christians, who likewise did not always feel the need to express their faith. In addition to what we can call 'taste' and 'convention', both inherent in the genre of the 'grave inscription', there are two other aspects to be considered: the context of the contemporary cemetery and the public.

4.3 *The Contemporary Cemetery and the Public*

In the course of the fourth century, the number of dated inscriptions increased; the inscriptions as grave monuments became more and more popular. This development was caused by the fact that a change took place during the fourth century: since the second third of the fourth century, interments in churches became more and more popular. The reason was that the Eucharist was celebrated in the cemeterial basilicas: it was considered to benefit the eternal fate of those interred in the church.[31] There was a slow transition from catacomb to church. The time of expansion of the catacombs finished in the 360s,[32] and after the first decades of the fifth century, the catacombs were no longer used for burial, except for the areas near the martyrs' graves.[33] This means that the localization of the inscriptions changed from a small hallway, probably visited only rarely, to a place which was frequented by a large public. The epitaphs were the means to demonstrate the place of the individual and of his family in the community, and a means of representation.

An example of such an inscription is the epitaph for Petronia, wife of the deacon Felix, who after the death of his wife and of pope Felix II (III) was the bishop of Rome from 483–494. This plaque, which is particularly large, measuring 1.00 × 3.10 m and the text on which can be completed with the help of transcriptions, was found in S. Paolo fuori le Mura, where it must have been located in a prominent spot. After Petronia's death in 472, her children Paula and Gordianus were interred in the same grave in 484 and 485 respectively, and in 489 the consecrated virgin Aemiliana was buried there. They are all mentioned on the plaque, which was visible during a longer period. Felix also

31 S. de Blaauw, 'Kultgebäude', *RAC* 22 (2007), 311–315.

32 V. Fiocchi Nicolai, 'Katakombe (Hypogäum)', *RAC* 20 (2004), 391.

33 Fiocchi Nicolai l.c., 394.

arranged his entombment in S. Paolo, as the only Roman bishop interred in this church. He obviously wanted to maintain the link with the grave of his family.[34]

Other ways of burial became less frequent: in the mausolea attached to churches, space is limited. The production of Roman sarcophagi decorated with figures stopped at the beginning of the fifth century.[35] The only surviving type of grave monument to commemorate an individual or a family is the grave inscription. The significance of the metrical grave inscriptions commissioned by Christians is expressed by the fact that it became a duty in the fifth and the sixth centuries for poets like Sidonius Apollinaris or Venantius. They were so popular that they were commissioned also for persons who had died long ago. It is not certain whether these texts were actually hewn in stone. It is known that several texts could be written for a single person: Paula, the ascetic and friend of Jerome who died in 404,[36] got two of them, both mentioned by Jerome in his letter to Eustochium, who therefore made them known across the Mediterranean. It comes as no surprise that parts of this epitaph were reused centuries later by clerics for their own grave inscriptions: in the sixth or seventh century by the abbot Honorius in Fregenal near Sevilla, and in the middle of the sixth century by the deacon Romulus in Avellino.[37] The public character of these inscriptions, which reveals an interest in representation and prestige, and much less in expressing ideas about the afterlife, has to be underlined.

4.4 *A Further Possibility: Theological Language and Everyday Life*

The context of the contemporary cemetery and the presence of a public with easy access to graves in churches do not completely explain the fact that faith in the afterlife is so rarely mentioned in grave inscriptions. Another possible explanation could be that the language and terminology of the theologians, who used terms such as resurrection or judgement, were not yet sufficiently present in the everyday life of Christians to be referred to in the inscriptions.[38] Maybe the lack of reception of theological terminology can be traced back to a lack of contact with theological language.

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34 Dresken-Weiland, *Himmel*, 144–147.

35 See J. Dresken-Weiland, 'Sarkophag', *RAC* 29 (2019), 591–633.

36 See lit. cited by Dresken-Weiland, *Himmel*, 197 n. 178.

37 See Dresken-Weiland, *Himmel*, 196 f.

38 The only group of inscriptions the mention the hope of resurrection can be found in Vienne, Dresken-Weiland, *Himmel*, 181 f. It seems that it was a standard form, which was current in the second half of the fifth century in Vienne and which was probably not a personal decision of the person who commissioned the inscription.

5 Ideas of the Afterlife and the World of Images

The hope of life after death and the expression of faith in the resurrection can be found in the world of images, although images in and on graves are less numerous than inscriptions. In my study *Bild, Grab und Wort. Untersuchungen zu Jenseitsvorstellungen von Christen des 3. und 4. Jhs*. I singled out the most popular themes on early Christian graves, as it is clear that those must have been relevant to contemporary Christians.[39] A perusal of early Christian authors' comments on and statements about these incidents and histories described in the Old and New Testament and the apocryphal literature shows that most of them are interpreted as references to the afterlife, resurrection, and the overcoming of death. Among the images in question is Jonah, who is interpreted by patristic authors as a sign of hope of resurrection and life after death.[40] The same applies to Daniel and to the sacrifice of Abraham. An important theme, whose frequency on sarcophagi has not been noted until now, is the multiplication of the loaves, or the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes. This image was interpreted from very early on in reference to the Eucharist and to eternal life, which has probably contributed to the high esteem in which this image was held. Among the most popular themes is the healing of the blind, which we have seen on the sarcophagus of Bassa. The healing of the blind had already been linked to the resurrection of Lazarus in the Gospel of John (11:37). This aspect was picked up very early by theologians, so that the healing of the blind is a frequently image that signals eternal life.

However, the images also show a more direct reference to the afterlife: the resurrection of Christ, the most direct reference, is only represented after the middle of the fourth century, and then exclusively on sarcophagi (it is not represented in catacomb painting),[41] and even in later times it is found only rarely. The crucifixion of Christ, as the condition for the salvation of humankind, might also have been an appropriate image, but this is reproduced only a few

39 See Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 18–21.

40 Jonah is interpreted as someone who sleeps, see J. Dresken-Weiland, 'Schlafende und Träumende in der frühchristlichen Kunst', *Römische Quartalschrift* 111 (2016), 204–215.

41 The earliest example is a sarcophagus from Servannes in Arles, B. Christern-Briesenick, *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage*, vol. III (Mainz 2003), nr. 42 (after 350), see also H. Bandenburg, *Repertorium der christlich-antiken Sarkophage*, vol. I (Wiesbaden 1967), nr. 933 (only known by a design), dated to the last quarter of the fourth century; sarcophagus fragment in Aix, *Repertorium* III, no. 20 (c. 350–375). For the iconography of the scene see M. Perraymond in F. Bisconti, *Temi di iconografia paleocristiana* (Rome 2000), 168 f.

times in antiquity,[42] because crucifixion was practised as a cruel and degrading punishment until the end of the fourth century,[43] and its representation was therefore avoided. Chronologically speaking, the next image that implies a more reflective reference to Christ's resurrection is that of the '*tropaion*'. The tropaion was the trophy of a Hellenistic or Roman military leader, bearing the name of the victorious commander. On Christian sarcophagi, it appears in the middle of the sarcophagus front and is decorated with the name of the victorious Christ in the form of a Christogram. The soldiers sitting under the tropaion take the place of the vanquished and defeated of the opposing army, but in contrast to the traditional iconography they are in possession of their weapons and therefore represent as participants in the victory. The tropaion refers to Christ's victory over death, his resurrection, and his timeless sovereignty, which the apostles, who flank the tropaion and render homage to Christ, share and to which they pay obeisance.[44]

The resurrection of Lazarus is also frequent in catacombs and on sarcophagi. On sarcophagi, the leading genre in the development of early Christian art, it was represented mostly in the first third of the fourth century and was thereafter substituted by the tropaion, whereas it is still to be found in the catacombs throughout the fourth century.[45] The theme of the resurrection of Lazarus is used in the most unusual expression of hope in the afterlife: in the catacomb of Praetextatus, near a fresco with the resurrection of Lazarus, dated to the second third of the fourth century, there is a window, an opening of 10 × 15 cm, marked by a red frame. It is possible to look through this window at the inhumation behind it. This kind of presentation is probably inspired by the conviction that death will not be the end, but that the deceased person is waiting, like Lazarus, in the darkness of the grave to be raised by Christ.[46]

Not all popular images can be interpreted as indicating hope of eternal life: for the birth of Christ or the adoration of the Magi the topic is that specific

42 See J. Dresken-Weiland, 'The cross, the relics of the Holy Cross and the iconography of the crucifixion', in H. Röckelein and G. Noga-Banai (eds), *Devotional 'Cross-Roads': Practising Love of God in Medieval Jerusalem, Gaul and Saxony* (Göttingen 2019), 11–36.

43 I recently identified the earliest preserved representation of the crucifixion in a Christian context on a sarcophagus fragment from the late fourth century: 'J. Dresken-Weiland, A new iconography in the face of death? A sarcophagus fragment with a possible Crucifixion scene in the Museo Pio Cristiano', in I. Foletti, *The face of the dead and the early Christian world* (Rome 2013), 133–148.

44 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 69.

45 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 217–219; see the list of the representations in A. Nestori, *Repertorio topografico delle pitture delle catacombe romane* (Vatican City 1993), 205.

46 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 228 f. fig. 104.

important event in the history of salvation, as the presupposition for overcoming death.[47] The fall of Adam and Eve was frequently commented on by theologians, but their ideas went in different directions, and thus did not influence the images. The images, however, diligently illustrate the reaction of Adam and Eve after the fall, and show them in different facets. They are testimony to the pleasure the artisans had when telling this story.[48] It was seemingly the same with representations of Noah in the ark. Here, the interpretations of early Christian authors do not offer a focus on the afterlife either. The image was generally known from third-century coins,[49] so that we can presume that it was common to tell this spectacular story in images. It offers several possibilities to reflect and contemplate.[50]

In addition to stories from the Old and New Testament, we find the story of Peter, who was represented on sarcophagi in order to positively influence deceased person's eternal fate. Represented is the capture of Peter by two soldiers, with whom Peter is speaking. This is expressed by the movement of his arm and by the eye contact he makes with one of the soldiers. The second scene shows Peter striking water from a rock in the Mamertine prison; he baptizes the two guards. This story does not appear in the New Testament, but is known only from the much later Pseudo-Linus and an even later *passio*.[51] In these texts, the story of Peter and his guards is not reported in detail, but only mentioned very briefly, or alluded to. We have to reconstruct this story from these allusions and the images. Of course, the story of Peter was well known in Christian circles and very probably also to contemporaries in the fourth century, but nobody wrote it down. Peter who converts his prison guards to Christianity and who baptizes them is an image that is found nearly exclusively on sarcophagi. I have argued elsewhere that the persons who commissioned the sarcophagi created these images to express their self-conception or self-image: for the people who made the decisions in politics, who exerted great influence through their money, who wanted to be influential even in the church, it was the prince of the apostles to whom they referred and from whom they expected help after death and on the Day of Judgement.[52]

47 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 267–276.
48 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 276–287.
49 J. Spier (ed.), *Picturing the Bible. The Earliest Christian Art* (Fort Worth 2007), 171 nr. 1.
50 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 287 f.
51 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 119 f.
52 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 144–146.

6 Images of Pagan Origin and Christian Transformations

Nearly all of these images were newly invented. In addition, however, Christians used pagan images of the afterlife such as a garden, stars, the context of meals, and bucolic representations. The standing female figure[53] with arms raised in the gesture of prayer has its origin in pagan art, but only became popular in the first half of the fourth century. The orans represents the soul of the dead; in Latin, '*anima*' is female, so that the female figure of the orans can also stand for a male person. The originally pagan orans was imported to scenes expressing the hope of salvation from death.[54] Among these images the orans accompanied by two male persons is particularly interesting.[55] It is a new creation of early Christian art. When the orans appears alone, it can be shown with doves or trees which indicate a paradisiacal ambience. These elements are lacking when the orans is accompanied by two male figures. Obviously, this points to a different context. Both men have stretched out their hands in a protective gesture which can rarely be found in other contexts. As far as I know, only two examples exist. The first is the representation of a family flanking Christ on a sarcophagus made about 350 and preserved in Perugia.[56] In this image, an apostle introduces a bearded man to Christ with this gesture. The image probably shows a family before Christ in the moment of judgement. The other example is a judgement scene in the Hermes catacomb in Rome, where both accompanying persons stretch out a hand towards the praying male person.[57] This itself suggests that this gesture of protection and of accompaniment has a very concrete sense. Two sarcophagi in San Clemente a Casauria and in Barcelona show the accompanying persons giving support to the orans: they touch her arm to help her to raise it. As the raised arms are a gesture of prayer, this probably means that the orans' company supports her prayer. The gesture indicates that the orans, that is, the soul of the deceased, is still on its way.[58]

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53 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 38 f.

54 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 38–95.

55 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 51–56.

56 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 54.

57 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 54.

58 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 55. In theological texts, someone's support is mentioned in the *Gospel of Peter*, written around the middle of the second century: Two angels support the resurrected Christ, but this does not refer to his frailty, but to his power and glory; in this context it has a honorific character: T. Nicklas, Th.J. Kraus, *Das Petrusevangelium und die Petrusapokalypse* (Berlin 2004), 42 f.; J. Denker, *Die theologiegeschichtliche Stellung des Petrusevangeliums. Ein Beitrag zur Frühgeschichte des Doketismus* (Berlin 1975), 99–101,

The following interpretations are possible: first, the image may imply an intermediate state of the deceased person's soul, in which the accompanying persons protect his or her soul and testify to its quality. Considering the importance of the soul's voyage to the other world in the cultures of antiquity, a second possibility is that it shows the journey of the dead individual to heaven. Third, maybe this scene shows the arrival of the dead person before God; the gesture of prayer fits this interpretation very well. The gesture of the companions may mean that they are pushing the deceased into God's presence at this very moment. Parallels of this interpretation may be the representations on the sarcophagus in Perugia and the fresco in the Hermes catacomb.[59]

These different explanations show that the creation of this image implies theological reflection, or a discussion of what was going to happen to a Christian after death. The creators of this image probably had in mind the *refrigerium*, and perhaps also standard expressions in inscriptions like '*inter sanctos*', '*cum sanctis*' or ΜΕΤΑ ΤΩΝ ΑΓΙΩΝ.

To sum up: ideas of the Christian afterlife are not frequent in inscriptions. This may have been caused by different reasons. Thus the frequent use of '*in pace*' was diffuse enough to be used even by non-Christians and the epigraphic habit of the fourth and fifth centuries preferred traditional images and formulae derived from poetry and belonged to the cultural baggage of an educated public. As inscriptions in churches were publicly visible, representative aspects and references to traditional ways of speaking were more important than the expression of personal hope in the afterlife. It is also possible that a theological terminology, including terms such as resurrection or judgement, was not yet sufficiently present in the everyday life of Christians to be referred to in the inscriptions. However, ideas of the afterlife are reflected most intensely in Christian images, which were mostly new creations. Most of the frequently represented themes can be interpreted as indicating hope in the afterlife and in the resurrection. Images were the best medium of their expression. Images commissioned by individual persons disappeared at the beginning of the fifth century, with the end of the production of sarcophagi and of burial in catacombs.[60]

256; E. Norelli u.a., *Ascensio Isaiae*, CCSA 7 (Turnhout 1995), 158 f. I owe this reference to the kindness of Enrico Norelli, Geneva.

59 Dresken-Weiland, *Bild*, 57 f.

60 My warmest thanks go to Nienke Vos and to Brian Heffernan for a perusal of my English text.

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FIGURE 7.1 The inscription of Severus for his daughter Severa
S. HENDRICHS, *LA VOCE DELLE CHIESE ANTICHISSIME DI ROMA* (ROME 1933), PL. 62 NR. 241

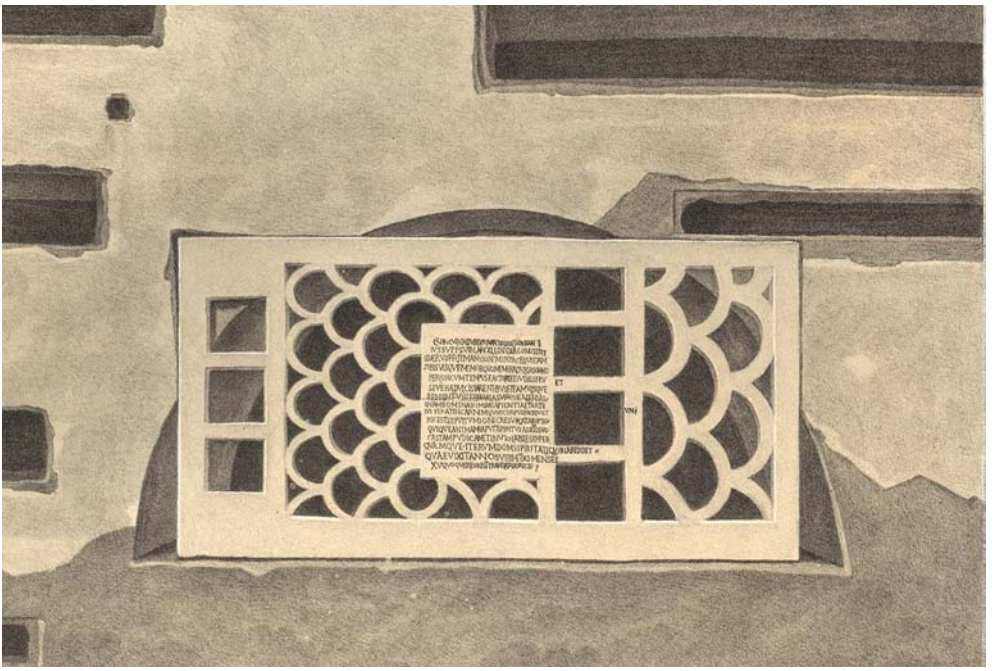

FIGURE 7.2 Reconstruction of Severa's grave
G.B. DE ROSSI, *LA ROMA SOTTERANEA CRISTIANA*, VOL. I (ROME 1864), 208

FIGURE 7.3 Inscription of Gaudentius for his wife Bassa; B. Mazzei in F. Bisconti and H. Brandenburg (eds), *Sarcofagi tardoantichi, paleocristiani e altomedievali* (Vatican City 2004) 120 fig. 3
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CHAPTER 8

Clothes Make the Magistrate: The Birth of Ecclesiastical Dress

Karel C. Innemée

What is the purpose of clothes? The question sounds so simple, but as in the case of clothes themselves, there are multiple layers in meaning and function of the textile and ornaments with which we cover our bodies. The first and primary function must have been protection of the body from heat and cold, and, in case of armour, from attacks. Another important function, though one which differs according to time and culture, is covering parts of the body that are taboo. A third aspect is the fact that dress conveys messages concerning the wearer to the outside world. It says who and what the wearer is, man or woman, whether he or she is a banker or a factory worker, while ornaments can give additional information, ranging from religion to the wearer's favourite football club. Social status can be reflected in the costliness of the fabrics used for a person's costume, but not necessarily; wearing worn-out clothes as a matter of fashion or prestige is not only a feature of our times, but was already known in antiquity.[1] A fourth aspect of clothing can be the authority it reflects, not the authority of the person as an individual, but the institution on behalf of which the person acts. In such cases we usually think of uniforms, but here there is a wide range of other categories, such as gowns worn in law courts and universities.[2] Ecclesiastical dress can certainly be categorized as a kind of uniform. It tells the member of a community that the wearer is not acting on his or her own authority, but that he or she represents the institution of a church,[3] and, in the last instance, God himself. As in the case of other uniforms, varieties in composition and ornamentation give information about the rank of the wearer

1 The worn-out pallium or *tribon* was a characteristic of poets and philosophers, showing their disregard for worldly matters: A. Cameron, 'Hypatia: life, death, and works' in A. Cameron, *Wandering Poets and Other Essays on Late Greek Literature and Philosophy* (Oxford 2015), 188; A.P. Urbano, '"Dressing a Christian", the Philosopher's Mantle as Signifier of Pedagogical and Moral Authority', *SP* 62 (2013), 213–229, at 213–214.

2 K.R. Dutton, *Academic Dress: A Brief Guide to its Origins and Development* (Newcastle Aus., 1983).

3 In this article, the focus will be on male representatives of ecclesiastical authority since this was the norm in early church tradition.

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and the authority and competences that come with it. But a uniform can tell more about the wearer than just his or her rank. In the army, medals of honour can be added to display special achievements, adding personal distinctions to the wearer's general place in the hierarchy. Similar personal distinctions can be added to a basic ecclesiastical costume.

In this contribution on the development of ecclesiastical dress in late antiquity, I will focus on the third and fourth aspects mentioned above, that is, on matters related to both identity/status and institutional representation. When considering the second issue, namely that of dress as the expression of organizational authority, we must—as has just been suggested—distinguish between personal and institutional privilege. We should also distinguish between the vestments that are worn during the liturgy and that can be considered essential (liturgical vestments, indications of the basic ranks of deacon, priest, and bishop) and the garments that can be worn outside the liturgy, at non-liturgical or even non-ecclesiastical occasions. This also includes monastic garments; this wider category will be called ecclesiastical dress too.

Liturgical dress has been the subject of scholarly attention for more than a century now, and perhaps the most elaborate study so far is the monumental volume by Joseph Braun S.J., *Die liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1907. As the title indicates, it deals with liturgical dress, and does so by discussing all components, from undergarments to attributes worn as additions, presenting the origin and morphological development of each garment. Monastic dress and non-liturgical ecclesiastical dress are not included in the study, and although the title of the book mentions liturgical dress in East and West, the stress is clearly on the liturgical costume of the Western (Roman Catholic) Church. Liturgical costumes of the various Eastern Churches have not yet been studied in equal measure and when they have, the focus has been on Byzantine liturgical dress.[4] Two comprehensive studies are worth mentioning here: Tano Papas, *Studien zur Geschichte der Messgewänder im byzantinischen Ritus*, München 1965 and Warren T. Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon, Liturgical Vestments and Sacerdotal Power in Byzantium*, Oxford 2012. As in Braun's work, these studies deal primarily with the liturgical aspects of ecclesiastical dress. Woodfin additionally dedicates a substantial part of the book to dress as an expression of authority and power, especially when it comes to the relationship between imperial and ecclesiastical dress and the rivalry between

4 Karel C. Innemée, *Ecclesiastical Dress in the Medieval Near East*, Studies in Textile and Costume History 1 (Leiden 1992), is a first attempt at using an integrated approach to the comparison of ecclesiastical dress in Nubia, Egypt, and the Syro-Palestine region. It also includes an analysis of monastic costume as an important influence on episcopal costume.

church and state in Byzantium. This aspect has so far been neglected in the study of ecclesiastical costume. Woodfin concentrates on the situation during the tenth century and later. A similar approach to and analysis of ecclesiastical costume (including monastic dress) as an expression of authority in earlier periods and other regions is likely to shed new light on the (social) position and authority of clergy and monks.

This article is not intended to summarize the complete, and extremely complicated, systems of ecclesiastical and liturgical garments. It aims at sketching the process that led to the development of a special costume for clerics. In what follows, I will therefore trace the developments of Christian ecclesiastical dress, starting with the Roman context in which Christianity emerged, via Constantine the Great to later times. I will discuss how, during the reign of Constantine, court ritual began to influence ecclesiastical ceremony. Next, I will zoom in on the specific ecclesiastical offices of bishops, priests, and deacons respectively. After reflections on the earliest phase from the fourth to sixth centuries, as well as later developments, the influence of imperial dress from the eighth century onwards will be addressed. The discussion of the close connection between imperial and liturgical dress will be completed by the consideration of one last significant factor: monastic dress. But I will start at the beginning of the process, the first and second centuries.

1 Roman Civil Dress

Since ecclesiastical dress reflects the organization and hierarchy of the church, it may be asked whether costumes related to certain offices in the church have been worn ever since a hierarchy started to take shape. In iconography, holy bishops from the first and second centuries, such as Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Clement of Alexandria, were frequently depicted in episcopal attire, but these representations are all from a much later period and must be considered anachronistic.[5] Prior to the fourth century no evidence survives, neither in written sources, nor in the scarce iconography of that time, of clergy expressing their institutional roles by a certain dress code. The only recommendation in the New Testament concerning the clothes to be worn during gatherings is found in 1 Corinthians 11:2–16, where the apostle Paul urges men to attend with uncovered head and women to keep their heads veiled, but this concerns the congregation in general.

5 Innemée, *Ecclesiastical Dress*, 56.

So, what did people wear when Christianity emerged? The basic garment for both men and women in the Roman Empire was the tunic. It was available in various sizes and forms: short, long, wide or more narrow, decorated or plain. Differences in shape, size, or decoration could express gender, social position, or wealth. The wide, rather short model was called *tunica dalmatica*,[6] while the long variety, reaching down to the ankles, was called *tunica talaris*. Those who did work that required a lot of movement (working-class people) would wear a shorter model, while the upper middle class would prefer the long one.

At first, during classical imperial times, white was the preferred colour for tunics and the only decoration would consist of *clavi*, vertical stripes in some contrasting colour from the shoulder down to the hem, but from the third century onwards, under the influence of Eastern fashion, dress in the central parts of the Empire became more colourful as well. Such decoration could consist of roundels or polygonal ornaments, woven or embroidered at the level of the shoulders or knees. Such garments are frequently represented in third- and fourth-century paintings and mosaics,[7] while numerous examples are known from Egyptian tombs.[8] The taste for colourful dress was especially popular among the lower and middle strata of society, while the aristocracy kept a more traditional taste for white garments, comparable to the grey, three-piece suit for men in present-day society.

For the average man-in-the-street the tunic was his only garment and an overgarment was only worn when it was cold or when it rained. Men of the higher classes would wear a *toga* or a *pallium* over the tunic. The toga was an expensive garment, woven of fine wool, and could be up to 7 meters long. Needless to say, putting it on required the help of a slave or assistant, after which freedom of movement was limited in order to keep it draped impeccably. Tertullian dedicated an essay to the pallium, which was smaller, more informal and easier to wear, in which he mockingly described the complications of putting on the toga and the relief of taking it off after coming home:

> First, as to the simple putting on of the pallium, it is absolutely not bothersome. Indeed, there is no need of a specialist, who, the day before use,

6 The name comes from Dalmatia, the region where this model was thought to originate. In this article, first references of foreign technical terms will be in italics. A glossary of terms has been included at the end of the article.

7 A good example of the variety of dresses can be seen in the mosaics of Piazza Armerina, for instance in a representation of a family with servants, K.M. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge 1999), 136, fig. 138.

8 A number of well-preserved tunics are kept in the Katoen Natie collection in Antwerp, Antoine de Moor, *3500 Years of Textile Art* (Tielt 2008), 180–189.

> forms the plies at the beginning and leads them in pleats, assigning the whole formation of the contracted *umbo*[9] to the custody of the pincers; who, at daybreak, having first shortened the tunic (which had better been woven at a moderate length!) with a belt, checks the umbo again and if anything has gone out of the track, rearranges it, lets a part of the garment hang down on the left, draws back from the shoulders the surrounding part (from which stem the foils), with its folds now ending, and leaving free the right shoulder piles it on the left shoulder yet again, with another mass of folds destined for the back, thereby imposing a burden upon the man. Now I will interrogate your conscience: how do you feel in a toga: dressed or oppressed? Is it like wearing clothes or bearing them? If you deny, I will follow you home, and I will see what you hasten to do right after the threshold. No other garment is taken off with such relief as the toga![10]

The pallium could be worn by both men and women. It originated from Greece and was a variation on the *himation*, a rectangular piece of cloth, also draped around the body, but considerably smaller and less complicated to wear. Initially the pallium was worn only by Greek teachers and intellectuals in Rome, but in the course of time Romans started wearing it too, although it kept an air of intellectualism, especially when it was worn out and the wearer tried to keep up a *bohémien* look. It might be compared to the twenty-first-century intellectual in his worn-out tweed jacket.[11]

Roman society was class-based, and to what class a person belonged could be inferred from his dress. The sometimes subtle differences could indicate much about a person's position. Any man with Roman citizenship was allowed to wear tunic and toga, and additional ornaments indicated the higher ranks. The class of the *equites* was allowed to wear narrow purple clavi on their tunics, while senators could have broader purple clavi. Curule magistrates, a group to which *censores* and consuls belonged, and who held the highest authority in the empire, were allowed to wear wide clavi and the *toga praetexta*, which was white with a broad purple border.

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9 The *umbo* (literally 'knob') was a decorative-cum-practical pouch formed by the fabric of the toga, draped over the left shoulder and hanging to the right, just above the *sinus* (the large fold hanging in front).

10 *De Pallio*, 5.1.1–5.2.2; see Vincent Hunink, *Tertullian: De Pallio, A Commentary* (Amsterdam 2005), 244–251.

11 See note 1.

Status and position were also reflected in the shoes. *Equites* and people of higher ranks were allowed to wear elegant shoes that were called *campagi*, made of fine leather, while those of senatorial rank and higher would wear them in red leather.

Dressing formally was a privilege, not an obligation, and those who wanted to distinguish themselves informally could choose the pallium instead of the toga. The pallium, in combination with a beard, was a characteristic of Greek philosophers and those who wanted to be seen as philosophers. Marcus Aurelius was educated in philosophy, and in a number of statues he is shown wearing the pallium, which, together with his beard, gave him the appearance of a Greek philosopher. Others, however, would simply dress like this to impress, without any philosophical background. The Greek aristocrat Herodes Atticus, a teacher of Marcus Aurelius and one of the most influential men of his time, was aware of this superficial fashion of dressing, and the writer Aulus Gellius quotes him as saying: '*"Video" inquit Herodes "barbam et pallium, philosophum nondum video."*' ('"I see", said Herod, "a beard and a pallium, but not yet a philosopher."').[12]

Tertullian recommended the pallium not only because it was more comfortable to wear and less complicated to put on, but also because of its connotation with philosophy, not just philosophy in general, but more specifically Christianity. This is a rare example of a text that recommends a Christian 'dress code', although it does not concern ecclesiastical dress in this case.[13] Nevertheless there was a special preference for the pallium in Christian circles, if not in daily life, then certainly in iconography. In the period before Constantine the Great, Christ was frequently represented as a philosopher or teacher, surrounded by his pupils/apostles, all dressed in tunic and pallium. Such scenes occur in catacomb paintings (Fig. 8.1).[14] This outfit, at least for the apostles, would survive in Christian iconography for centuries to follow.

12 *Noctes Atticae* 9.2.4; Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, ed. P.K. Marshall, vol. 1 (Oxford 1968), 278.

13 *De Pallio*, 6.2.5: 'Rejoice, pallium, and exult! A better philosophy has deigned you worthy, from the moment that it is the Christian whom you started to dress.'; Hunink, *Tertullian: De Pallio*, 292.

14 For instance, in the catacomb of Domitilla and the hypogeum of the Giordani; see M.A. Crippa and M. Zibawi, *L'art paléochrétien, des origines à Byzance* (Paris 1998), pl. 35, 37.

2 Constantine the Great and the Development of Ecclesiastical Dress

The reign of Constantine the Great marks a change, both in the iconography of the costume of Christ and in the actual dress of bishops. From the fourth century onwards, the iconography of Christ was strongly influenced by imperial iconography, as an expression of the ideology that the emperor was the earthly representative of Christ, while Christ was the 'heavenly emperor'.[15] In a fifth-century painting in the catacomb of Pietro e Marcellino, for instance, Christ is no longer the philosopher, but is depicted in purple instead of white garments, seated on a throne, his head surrounded by a halo, all imperial characteristics. Peter and Paul, standing beside him making gestures of acclamation, are still wearing white tunics and pallia.[16]

From the late fifth century onwards, the pallium began to be worn in a different way. Instead of draping it around the body, the wearer would fold it twice into a strip of approximately 30 cm wide, which was worn over the shoulders, with one end hanging in front, the other on the back, more like a kind of wide shawl than like a cloak (Fig. 8.2).

As an overgarment, worn over the tunic, the *paenula* or *planeta*, a poncho-like cloak, became more and more fashionable. It had the shape of a large piece of fabric with a hole for the head in the middle. It could also have a hood attached to it, and thus cover the whole body in a tent-like shape. This is probably why it was also called *casula*, the diminutive of *casa* (house) (Fig. 8.3). Originally it was a garment for slaves and the lower classes, but in the third century, it was adopted by fashionable people as a convenient riding or travelling cloak; and finally, by the sumptuary law of 382[17] it was prescribed as the proper everyday dress of senators, instead of the military *chlamys*,[18] the toga being reserved for state occasions. The now shawl-like pallium could be worn over this paenula. This combination of garments would be the origins of episcopal dress as we see it depicted in sixth-century representation: tunic, chasuble, and pallium (Fig. 8.4).

15 H.O. Maier, 'Roman imperial iconography and the social construction of early Christian identity', *Consensus* 33.1 (2008), 59–71; Felicity Harley, 'Christianity and the Transformation of Classical art', in P. Rousseau (ed.), *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester 2009), 306–326, especially 318–320, where she discusses the transformation of the Christ-philosopher into the Christ-emperor image.

16 Crippa and Zibawi, *L'art paléochrétien*, pl. 36.

17 Codex Theodosianus, 14.10.0 *De habitu, quo uti oportet intra urbem*. http://droitromain.upmf-grenoble.fr/Constitutiones/CTh14.html#10, accessed 7 June 2017.

18 A wide cape of ancient Greek origin.

The toga did not disappear, but the way of wearing it gradually changed as well, by folding it in its length. It remained a long and rather wide strip of fabric, which was draped around the body several times. In the course of the fifth and sixth centuries, it became more and more colourful under influence of Eastern fashion, like other imperial and aristocratic garments. Imported silk was used more and more. As a result, the so-called *toga picta* appeared, a luxurious and colourful version of the toga that was reserved for the emperor and high officials at special occasions.

Consuls had the right to use an elegant attribute: the *mappa*, a kind of kerchief that was held in the hand, folded in two. It probably originated from a normal kerchief that could be used to wipe one's face, and a similar attribute was used by upper-class ladies.[19] As an attribute of consuls it was mainly used to give the signal for the start of races in the hippodrome. The maniple and the *enchirion*, two liturgical attributes in the Western and Eastern churches respectively, may have derived from the mappa.[20]

Consuls wearing the toga picta and holding the mappa are represented on the so-called consular diptychs, luxurious writing tablets carved out of ivory that were distributed as commemorative presents on the occasion of a consul's appointment.[21]

It is difficult, if not impossible, to pinpoint a moment when ecclesiastical dress was 'born'. As in later centuries, it was probably a process of 'fossilization' of a certain costume that was once common for a larger group but failed to develop along with worldly dress. Similarly, in the sixteenth century, this process was repeated when the churches of the Reformation abandoned Roman Catholic and Orthodox liturgical dress and replaced it with the then common gowns that university professors wore. In most universities nowadays, such gowns are only worn on special occasions, while in Protestant churches ministers wear them every Sunday.

The edict of Milan of 313 and the subsequent sponsoring of the church by Constantine and his successors had a profound impact, not only on its organization and theology, but also on its material culture (church architecture),

19 It can be seen in the mosaic panel of Theodora with her ladies-in-waiting in San Vitale in Ravenna; it also occurs later in the dress of the Virgin Mary, for instance in the apse of Hagia Sophia in Kiev (eleventh cent.).

20 The maniple (*manipulum*) is an ornament, a strip of textile worn over the left arm. It is hardly used anymore in the Roman Catholic Church. The enchirion was an ornamental kerchief, worn in the hand or hanging from the girdle (see below).

21 For instance, the consular diptych of Rufus Gennadius Probus Orestes, 530 CE, Victoria and Albert Museum, http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/the-symmachi-panel/ accessed 7 June 2017.

iconography, and ritual. Court ritual started to influence ecclesiastical ceremonies and liturgy, and the splendour of newly-built churches must have stood in stark contrast to the *domus ecclesiae* of the preceding centuries. That does not imply that the dress of the clergy was immediately adapted, and most likely both congregation and clergy kept on wearing what we still call 'Sunday best' clothing.

Ecclesiastical hierarchy, by origin, has three basic ranks: deacon (*diakonos*), priest (*presbyteros*) and bishop (*episkopos*). The bishops, as the highest clerics, were incorporated into the worldly system of social ranks. Under Constantine many of them received the rank of *vir illustris*, the highest title within the senatorial rank. That gave them the right to dress as senators, wearing a tunic with purple clavi, a pallium, and campagi.[22] They would certainly have worn these garments during the liturgy, and when civil dress slowly changed in the course of the following centuries, bishops, as well as priests and deacons, kept on wearing the traditional dress, which now became gradually associated with their ecclesiastical rank rather than with their social position. It is not exactly clear how and when this transition from dress as a marker of social status to that of ecclesiastical rank took place, and when aristocratic dress and ecclesiastical costume took diverging paths.

When in 653 pope Martinus I was abducted to Constantinople to stand trial on charges of high treason, he was convicted, and, as a token of his being removed from his office, his pallium was taken from him and the leather bands of his campagi were publicly cut.[23] In a similar case, although it is clearly an anachronistic legend which was written down much later, St. Nicholas hit Arius in the face during the Council of Nicaea (325) and was then stripped of his *omophorion* (the Eastern counterpart of the pallium) by way of punishment.[24] It seems that in both cases the stress lay on the ecclesiastical dignity, and less on the general social status that was associated with the pallium and campagi.

A number of dated pictorial documents from the first half of the sixth century show bishops in their formal attire, and the importance of these representations lies in the fact that they give a more or less contemporary picture of the costume of bishops. This is all the more valuable because bishops were usually

22 Th. Klauser, *Der Ursprung der bischöflichen Insignien und Ehrenrechte*, Bonner akademische Reden l (Krefeld 1949/1953); also published in Th. Klauser, *Gesammelte Arbeiten zur Liturgiegeschichte, Kirchengeschichte und christlichen Archäologie* = Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsband 3 (1974), 195–211.

23 Klauser, *Ursprung*, 197–198.

24 G. Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos: Der Heilige Nikolaos in der Griechischen Kirche* (Leipzig/Berlin 1913), 1.459.

represented long after their death, in a way that is representative for the period in which the depiction was made rather than for the period during which the depicted person actually lived.

In the famous mosaic panels in the sanctuary of the San Vitale church in Ravenna, made in the second quarter of the sixth century, we see a procession with the Emperor Justinian and Bishop Maximian as the most prominent figures on one side, and the Empress Theodora and her train on the opposite side. Maximian is wearing a white tunic with wide sleeves and black clavi, a gold-coloured paenula, over which he wears a white pallium. He is also wearing black and white campagi (or black campagi with white socks). He is followed by two deacons, one holding a censer, the other a codex, who are wearing only white tunics of the same model as the bishop, and similar footwear (fig. 4). Maximian's outfit is comparable to that of aristocratic gentlemen of the late fourth or fifth century, with one important difference: the pallium seems to consist of a single strip of fabric, not a wide strip folded in its length, and it is decorated with a black cross. This cross especially seems to indicate that it had already undergone a transformation from civil to ecclesiastical garment. That does not imply that a next step, the creation of liturgical vestments, had already been taken. In the sanctuary of San Apollinare in Classe near Ravenna there are the portraits of bishops Ecclesius (521–531), Ursicinus (533–536), and Severus (c. 342–c. 344/346). All three are wearing almost identical dress, apart from the colours of the paenulae. The portrait of Severus can probably not be considered a reliable representation of fourth-century episcopal dress, since the costume looks identical to that worn by his sixth-century successors, but the other two must be seen as representative of the sixth century.

The pallium was worn throughout the Roman Empire, but there must have been regional differences in the way it was worn. A papyrus fragment of the so-called *Alexandrian World Chronicle*, referring to the destruction of the Serapeum in Alexandria in 392, shows bishop Theophilus, standing on top of the Serapeum, wearing a cape, over which he is wearing a scarf that is tightly wound around his neck. Although this miniature probably dates to the second quarter of the sixth century, it may be based on older examples (the manuscript is based on earlier versions) and it probably shows Theophilus dressed in a civilian costume that is the predecessor of ecclesiastical and liturgical dress.[25] In early representations of other Egyptian bishops depicted in liturgical dress, the

25 Richard W. Burgess and Jitse H.F. Dijkstra, 'The 'Alexandrian World Chronicle', its Consularia and the Date of the Destruction of the Serapeum (with an Appendix on the List of Praefecti Augustales)', in *Millennium, Yearbook on the Culture and History of the First Millennium C.E.* 10.1 (2013), 81, n. 150.

omophorion (the liturgical vestment that was derived from the pallium in Eastern churches) is worn in a similar way, like a shawl, tightly turned around the neck, with both ends hanging to the front.[26]

3 The Costume of the Bishop

Having discussed the origin of the earliest episcopal garments, let us summarize the composition of the bishop's costume. The costume of a bishop in its first phase of development was identical to that of other magistrates who had the title and privileges of an *illustris*, and over time, it developed in its own way, until it had become different from civil dress, which itself had its own path of development. The shape and decoration of the pallium that we see in sixth-century representations show that it may have been one of the first vestments that underwent the transition from civil to ecclesiastical and that became associated with the office of bishop. In the East it became known as omophorion ('worn on the shoulders') and is until the present day the vestment *par excellence* for a bishop. In the West, it was initially bestowed on bishops, first of all the bishop of Rome, by the Christian emperors, but after the capital was moved to Constantinople, the pope must have claimed the right to grant this privilege.[27] At the end of the sixth century there was a conflict between pope Gregory the Great and bishop John of Ravenna concerning the use of the pallium. Although Ravenna was not under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome, and had since 584 been an exarchate of the Byzantine Empire, Gregory tried to forbid John to wear the pallium on other occasions than during the liturgy, accusing him of a lack of humility by wearing it in public.[28] This can be seen as an indication that by this time the pallium/omophorion was undergoing a transition from ecclesiastical/social distinctive to a purely liturgical vestment. It also shows that the Eastern and Western use of the pallium and the authority that the pope claimed over it, were apparently a point of controversy. In the West the pallium has become, and still is, a distinction for metropolitan bish-

26 Innemée *Ecclesiastical Dress*, 51–53.

27 It is difficult to say when the bishop of Rome started claiming this right; Braun supposes that it must date back to at least the fifth century, seeing that in the sixth century it is already mentioned as an institutionalized phenomenon; Joseph Braun S.J., *Die Liturgische Gewandung im Occident und Orient, nach Ursprung und Entwicklung, Verwendung und Symbolik* (Freiburg im Breisgau 1907), 625–627.

28 Adam Serfass, 'Unravelling the Pallium Dispute between Gregory the Great and John of Ravenna', in Kristi Upson-Saia, Carly Daniel-Hughes and Alicia J. Batten (eds), *Dressing Judeans and Christians in Antiquity* (Farnham 2014), 75–96.

ops and in special cases a personal privilege for ordinary bishops. It is granted by the pope to the (metropolitan) bishop personally and is not automatically part of his liturgical outfit, which means that it can be considered a sign of rank, rather than a liturgical garment. In the East, on the other hand, it has become a standard part of the episcopal dress, regardless of the rank or special status of the bishop.

The other parts of the episcopal costume were less controversial. The basic garment, not only for the bishop, but for other ranks as well, was the white tunic, which became known as alb (from *alba*-white) in the West and *stichar-ion* in the East. The mantle known in the Latin-speaking regions as paenula, casula, or planeta became the upper vestment for both priests and bishops. In the mosaics of Ravenna it is still a wide, probably circular cape with an opening for the head, but after some time its shape was modified into what looks like a lemniscate (∞) in order to give the arms more freedom of movement. The name paenula was the basis for the later Greek name: *phelonion*, while the Western name chasuble is derived from casula.

The campagi, worn already in the fourth century, were part of the episcopal costume, but their use was gradually restricted to the Roman pope. He started wearing them in red fabric or leather, a colour reserved to the emperor in late antiquity and in the Byzantine period, possibly in early medieval times. This must probably be seen as one of the signs by which the bishop of Rome claimed more and more political and imperial authority in the former Western half of the empire.

4 The Costume of the Deacon and the Priest

The basic priestly costume is more or less a 'ritualized' version of the average gentleman's dress of the fourth and fifth centuries.[29] As in episcopal costume, it has the tunic and the casula/paenula as its basic elements. The difference is the stole that was worn over the tunic and under the paenula. This *stola* (from the Greek *stolē*, which simply means 'garment') originates from a scarf that was worn by both men and women in a number of varieties, and that could be draped around the head or the shoulders, according to the weather or the

29 Rituals are actions that are carried out according to a strict and invariable sequence. Civil costume is usually subject to fashion and therefore to change. 'Ritualized costume' by contrast means that the shape of the costume in question is frozen in time under the influence of the ritual of which it has become part. Liturgical costume has also changed over time, but this change has been more gradual and much slower.

occasion. The female and larger version, used to cover head and shoulders, was also known as *palla*. The priest's stole is closely related, if not identical in its original shape, to the deacon's stole, known as *orarion* and sometimes both are given the same name, another indication of their similarity. That it was basically the same vestment can also be deduced from the texts of consecration rituals for the priest: he enters the church, dressed as a deacon with the orarion hanging over one shoulder. After the moment of consecration, the orarion is draped around the neck with both ends hanging in front.[30]

In the early church the bishop was the person who had full authority to administer the sacraments, with the *presbyteri* functioning as his assistants. As early as the fourth century, as the episcopal office became more and more a manager's job, the responsibility for most of the sacraments, except the ordination of bishops, was delegated to priests.

Gradually the priestly stole became so closely connected with the office that no sacraments could be administered without the priest wearing it. The orarion is documented for the first time in the second half of the fourth century, but the obligation for deacons and priests to wear it can first be observed in Spain in the sixth century.[31] At a moment which is difficult to trace, the priestly stole or orarion became known in the East as *epitrachelion* (litt. 'around the neck'), the term that is still in use today in the Greek Orthodox Church. It may have come with a gradual change in shape, with the two ends that hang to the front being buttoned together or even permanently fixed to each other.

5 From Social Distinction to Ecclesiastical Costume to Liturgical Dress: Reflections and Later Developments

Retracing our steps, we may observe that there was no unity, neither in dogma, nor in organization, in the various churches until the Council of Nicaea. Before that, hierarchy was based on episcopal authority at a regional level and dioceses could function as autonomous units in many respects. With the reign of Constantine and his self-imposed authority over a Catholic Church, and the ecumenical councils in the following two centuries, a gradual process of building unity was set in motion. Regional traditions, heterodox movements, and

30 *Rituale Romanum* (1964) part VIII, The English translation was accessed at http://d03fe30f-fff9-424f-b66f-01063bd12972.filesusr.com/ugd/c6f7dd_4ff0f5d827d24264a448bf986de11f7a.pdf on 8 January 2018.

31 Braun, *Liturgische Gewandung*, 569–572.

differences of opinion concerning theology and ritual have never disappeared and the development of ecclesiastical dress is one of the phenomena that have never become uniform. The fact that regional synods were issuing canons concerning the proper use of vestments well into the Middle Ages shows that such matters had not yet been regulated at a higher level. Meanwhile, as early as the Council of Chalcedon (451), a number of churches had gone their own way, developing their own traditions and regulations concerning ecclesiastical dress. The ecumenical councils were focused on theological matters and vestments were a matter that long escaped legislation at patriarchal and conciliar level.

From the fourth century, when the first evidence for ecclesiastical distinctions in dress can be found, until the time that a full-grown liturgical costume had been formed, developments are often difficult to trace. First of all it is not clear whether bishops in general had the privilege of wearing the costume associated with the rank of *illustris* (the highest senatorial rank). The next step would have been that bishops retained the paenula/phelonion and pallium/omophorion in an archaic form, while civil fashion developed further, thus making them characteristics of ecclesiastical rank. Such vestments would have been worn by a bishop in any public appearance. The fact that bishop John of Ravenna was reprimanded by pope Gregory for wearing the pallium on other occasions than during the liturgy, shows that a turning point had apparently been reached around 600, where a social distinction was transformed into a vestment for liturgical use only.

The dress of priests and deacons was certainly not associated with higher social rank, and for them a strictly liturgical use of at least the orarion/stole may have started as early as the second half of the fourth century. The 22nd and 23rd canons of the Council of Laodicea (363/364) forbid ranks lower than deacon from wearing the orarion, among other canons that have direct pertinence to the liturgy.[32]

The remarkable fact is that until the tenth century bishops apparently did not wear the orarion/epitrachelion, and their status and full authority to administer sacraments was implied by their episcopal dress. This is apparent in, for instance, the sixth-century mosaics in Ravenna (fig. 4). In the illustrations of the Menologion of Basilius II, made around the year 1000, some miniatures show some holy bishops with, and others without the epitrachelion, an indication that around this time it had become a recent addition to episcopal dress.

32 Canons of the Council of Laodicea (NPNF^2 14: 140, 143).

Around the same time another element was added to episcopal costume in the Eastern Church, probably not a liturgical attribute by origin, but a later version of the aristocratic mappa. It occurs in iconography as a decorated piece of fabric that appears from under the phelonion of bishops, while it is called enchirion in texts. Originally it must have been held in the hand, since this what the literal translation of the Greek word means. The late Roman costume did not have pockets and only the lower classes wore girdles. By the tenth century however, the episcopal costume included a girdle and the enchirion could be stuck under this girdle, much in the same way in which ladies were doing this. The eleventh-century apse mosaic of Hagia Sophia cathedral in Kiev shows such a kerchief is hanging from the Virgin Mary's girdle. The problem in using Byzantine iconography to analyse ecclesiastical dress is that bishops were hardly ever portrayed during their lifetime and thus dated pictorial evidence is rare. Saints were often represented in a dress that was archaizing, and therefore representative neither of the period during which these images were made, nor of the time of the saint in question. A remarkable solution for part of this problem are the portraits of Nubian bishops, depicted in mural paintings in the cathedral of Faras (now in the collections of the National Museums of Khartoum and Warsaw). In Nubia, bishops were portrayed after their enthronisation, and since Nubian ecclesiastical dress was strongly influenced by Byzantium, we can consider it an indirect source of information for Byzantine dress as well. In eleventh-century Nubian paintings showing contemporary bishops, the enchirion is depicted in the hand. Bishop Marianos and the Virgin Mary, depicted together, both hold it in their hand, an indication that it was an upper-class ornament, rather than a liturgical attribute.[33]

It never had a practical function, and at a later stage it was transformed into a lozenge-shaped, rigid ornament, called, more appropriately, *epigonation* (Gr. 'on the knee'), worn by bishops and also by some priests as a personal distinction for certain merits.

6 Episcopal Dress and Imperial Elements

The late Roman gentleman went bareheaded and so did most bishops for a very long time. It was not until the eighth century that the bishops of Rome started wearing the *camelaucum*, a white linen bonnet, worn at the Byzantine court. By

33 B. Mierzejewska, *The Professor Kazimierz Michałowski Faras Gallery* (Warsaw 2014), 150–151.

the eleventh century this may have developed into the episcopal *mitra* (mitre), which initially still had a bonnet-like shape. The papal version, augmented with a metal coronet-like lower rim, became known as the tiara, and over the centuries it developed into its final shape with three coronets. In Byzantium it was the emperor who could grant a luxury version of this headdress, the *kamelaukion*, to vassals, and, by the fourteenth century, in exceptional cases, to bishops as well. Little is known about the number of bishops who wore such a crown-like headdress and what it looked like exactly in this late period of the Byzantine Empire, and it was not until after the fall of Constantinople that the Eastern version of the mitra, possibly derived from the imperial kamelaukion, became the headdress for bishops in general.[34]

Another prestigious vestment, worn by the emperor on certain occasions, was the *sakkos*, a wide, richly decorated tunic that had its origin in the late antique tunica dalmatica. Initially, in the twelfth century, it could be granted only to the patriarch of Constantinople, and by the thirteenth century to archbishops in exceptional cases.[35] They were certainly markers of (personal) prestige and distinction and not liturgical garments.

After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, when imperial authority ceased to exist and the patriarch of Constantinople now considered himself the highest Christian authority in what used to be the Roman Empire, it became the remit of the highest church authorities to decide on 'dress code'. Consequently, these two important parts of the former imperial costume, the crown and the sakkos, gradually became part of the episcopal outfit, and with the disappearance of the Byzantine system of marking classes by their dress, they developed into ecclesiastical and finally liturgical vestments.

The close relationship between imperial and liturgical dress in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine periods is not just a matter of what bishops and emperors were actually wearing, but also plays an important part in iconography. The Christian emperors of the fourth century and their Byzantine successors considered themselves the representatives of God on earth and this is reflected in the way that Christ appears in icons, mosaics, and mural paintings in churches. The rather late (late fifteenth-/early sixteenth-century) type of Christ as *megas hiereus kai basileus* ('great priest and king') presents him dressed in the imperial costume with sakkos, *loros* (the richly decorated Byzantine version of the toga picta) and the imperial kamelaukion on his head. In 'ritualized' representations

34 W. Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon, Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium* (Oxford 2012), 28–29.

35 Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 25–28.

of the Last Supper, the so-called apostles' communion, Christ is depicted as a bishop or patriarch in full liturgical costume, administering the Eucharist to his disciples and the same is the case in representations of the so-called Heavenly Liturgy, where Christ officiates, assisted by angels, dressed as deacons.[36] At first sight these imperial and patriarchal costumes look very similar, and only upon close examination is it clear that the loros and omophorion are different and that the patriarchal crown differs from the imperial one, the difference being the absence of the lateral pendants in the episcopal crown.

7 Ecclesiastical and Monastic Dress

Apart from the civil and aristocratic/imperial costume, there is another element that influenced the episcopal costume, especially in the Eastern churches: monastic dress. Initially, until the middle of the fifth century, monasticism was a lay movement, not embedded in the organization of the church. Monks and hermits had their own dress code, although this was different from region to region. One element, however, became standard for many monks: a pointed hood (*cuculla*) or a headscarf, draped around the head.[37] One of the rules for most monks who wore some kind of monastic uniform was that it should be worn night and day, at least the girdle and the head cover. When more and more monks were consecrated priest or even made bishops after the middle of the fifth century, some of them kept their heads covered during the liturgy, even though they were criticized for doing so.[38] After all, monks and hermits usually wore shabby, neglected or even dirty outfits, which were considered incompatible with the clean, ceremonial costume for the liturgy. Gradually it became a rule that bishops were recruited from monastic circles and as a consequence the monastic hood became part of the episcopal costume in certain regions (Egypt, Armenia, Syria), although some kept insisting that a bishop should celebrate bareheaded.[39] When the hood was transformed into a liturgical garment, it became white in colour, instead of the traditional brown or black hood of normal monks. In Nubia, bishops also added the monastic

36 By representing the Last Supper as a patriarchal liturgy, its meaning as the institution of the Eucharist is underscored, while it also stresses the position of the patriarch as the representative of Christ. See Woodfin, *Embodied Icon*, 187–196.

37 Innemée, *Ecclesiastical Dress*, 116–117.

38 The basis for this was the instruction in 1Cor 11:4, where Paul recommends that men should be bareheaded in the liturgy.

39 Braun, *Liturgische Gewandung*, 50; Innemée, *Ecclesiastical Dress*, 80.

scapular in a richly decorated version to their costume (Fig. 8.5).[40] In this case of monastic influence on the episcopal costume there is also a process by which certain garments at first were meant to show the social (monastic) status of the wearer, and were gradually integrated into the ecclesiastical and liturgical costume (Fig. 8.6).[41] This is still visible in the Coptic Church, where monks wear black tunics and hoods in daily life, but exchange them for white ones when they celebrate the liturgy, whether they are deacons, priests, or bishops.

In the Eastern churches it became a rule that bishops should be recruited from monastic circles and even if a candidate-bishop was not a monk, he should be professed as such the day before his consecration as a bishop. As a result, all the higher clergy in the East are monks, and consequently the influence of monastic dress has been stronger than in the West, where the two hierarchies (monastic and ecclesiastical) are less intertwined.

8 Conclusions

There is no evidence that before the reign of Constantine I there was any kind of ritual costume for clerics. The shaping of one ecclesiastical hierarchy throughout the Christian world was a process that started with the Council of Nicaea (325) but it was never accomplished, due to the fact that after the schism of Chalcedon (451) a number of churches went their own way. Apart from that, the ecumenical councils have never issued rules concerning ecclesiastical and liturgical dress. As a result, the development of such costumes was at first rather unsystematic and differences must have occurred according to regional habits. Consequently, different systems took shape within the various patriarchates over time.

These ecclesiastical costumes were based on late Roman civil dress, with the addition of certain garments and attributes that indicated the social position of bishops, and as such they were part of daily costume, and were not liturgical garments. The most prominent example is the (civil) pallium, which is the predecessor of the pallium in the Roman Catholic Church and of the omophorion

40 K.C. Innemée, 'Relationships between episcopal and monastic vestments in Nubian wall-paintings', in W. Godlewski (ed.), *Coptic Studies, Acts of the Third International Congress of Coptic Studies, Warsaw 20–25 August 1984* (Warsaw 1990), 161–163; Innemée, *Ecclesiastical Dress*, 149–150.

41 This is visible in a manuscript illustration showing the Emperor Johannes Kantakouzenos presiding over a synod, with both monks and bishops wearing the monastic hood (mid fourtheenth cent.); Ms. Gr.1242, fol. 5 v, 33,5 × 24 cm, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

in the Eastern churches. In the West it has remained a personal distinction, granted by the Roman pope, while in the East it became a fixed part of the liturgical costume for all bishops.

Apart from this gradual process in which civil garments of social distinction were gradually turned into ecclesiastical vestments, there was a parallel development by which liturgical vestments were introduced based on ordinary civil garments. The orarion is likely to have been the first liturgical vestment, distinguishing deacons from the priest during the liturgy, possibly from the late fourth century onwards. It developed into the priestly stole, called epitrachelion in the East, and as such it has remained the most important liturgical vestment, being the prime vestment that distinguished clergy from laics. In the following centuries the number of vestments that we can call 'liturgical' grew, as certain civil garments lost their meaning and use, but kept on being used by the clergy, only in the context of the liturgy.

Like military uniforms, ecclesiastical dress in the first place shows the position of the wearer within the hierarchy, and in the second place it can be augmented by elements that are bestowed by a higher authority (emperor or patriarch) as personal distinctions of merit or position. The influence of the imperial court was an important factor from the fourth century onwards, and this continued in the Byzantine Empire, whereas in the West a separate system developed, especially after the patriarchate of Rome was no longer within the sphere of political influence of Constantinople.

Monasticism started as a lay movement, but with the gradual integration of monastic communities in the organizations of the various churches and the appointment of monks as bishops, monastic dress became a factor of influence on the ecclesiastical costume as well.

In spite of the fact that ecclesiastical dress gives the impression of being traditional, its birth and development have been a highly dynamic process in which the expression of social status and hierarchy, both worldly and ecclesiastical, and the (changing) relationship between church and state have been influential factors.

List of Terms

Camelaucum—a white linen bonnet, part of the civil costume worn at the Byzantine court.

Campagi—luxury shoes, worn by men from the Roman upper class.

Casula—(litt. little house) cape with a circular shape and a hole in the centre for the head. It could have an attached hood.

Chlamys—a cloak of Greek origin, fastened at the shoulder, leaving the right arm free.

Clavus (pl. clavi)—a vertical decorative band on a tunic, starting from the shoulder and sometimes continuing down to the lower hem.

Cuculla—pointed hood, originally worn by children, but adopted by monks as part of their costume.

Enchirion—ceremonial kerchief, held in the hand by bishops. It was an ecclesiastical successor to the civil mappa.

Epigonation—ceremonial attribute with a lozenge shape, hanging from the girdle of a bishop, developed out of the enchirion.

Epitrachelion—priestly stole in the Eastern churches, consisting of an elongated strip of fabric of which both ends are hanging down on the chest, and connected with buttons or sewn together. It developed out of the orarion.

Himation—a Greek civil garment, consisting of a rectangular piece of fabric, draped around the body.

Kamelaukion—a headdress, derived from the camelaucum, that has a semi-globular shape and consists of a textile core, fitted with a gold diadem and gold embroidery. It could be given as a sign of special favour to vassals and bishops by the Byzantine emperor.

Loros—a long narrow scarf of richly woven or embroidered fabric, possibly up to 4 metres long, draped around the body and the left arm, worn by the emperor and the highest officials. It developed out of the toga picta.

Mappa—a kerchief, held in the hand as an elegant attribute, used by the upper classes in late antiquity.

Mitra—a textile bonnet, derived from the camelaucum, and worn by bishops, from the eleventh century onwards. In the West it gradually assumed a pointed shape, while in the East it developed into a pear-shaped, richly decorated headdress with metal decoration and gold embroidery.

Omophorion—A long scarf of decorated fabric, worn around the shoulders by bishops with one end hanging in front, the other on the back. It is a liturgical vestment, derived from the civil pallium.

Orarion—a long and narrow strip of fabric, worn by deacons and priests as a liturgical vestment and an indication of their rank. Deacons wear it on one shoulder, a priest would wear it around the neck with both ends hanging in front.

Paenula—a cape for civil use, originally for the lower classes, but later also worn by the military and higher classes. It consists of a more or less circular piece of fabric with a hole for the head. Usually it could be closed with buttons on the front.

Palla—a garment for women, similar to the pallium for men. It would be fastened with pins or brooches.

Pallium—an upper garment for Roman men, consisting of a long strip of (white) fabric, draped around the body, usually on top of the tunic.

Phelonion—a liturgical upper vestment for Eastern priests and bishops, derived from the planeta or the paenula.

Planeta—a garment similar to the paenula, but closed on all sides.

Sakkos—a wide tunic, worn over the under-tunic at the Byzantine court, and later taken over by bishops as upper garment, instead of the phelonion. The model is derived from the tunica dalmatica, but its decoration is far more elaborate.

Sticharion—the Greek name for the tunic that serves as the basic liturgical vestment for all ecclesiastical ranks.

Stola—a general term for shawls worn by Roman men and women. In the West it became the term for the priest's orarion in the early Middle Ages.

Toga—the upper garment for the Roman male aristocracy, consisting of a long piece of white fabric (usually fine wool), approximately six by three meters in size and draped around the body in a complicated way.

Toga picta—a special variety of the toga, dyed purple and embroidered in gold. It was worn by emperors, consuls, and generals during their triumphal parade.

Toga praetexta—a white toga with a broad purple stripe on its border, worn over a tunic.

Tribon—an upper garment of Greek origin for men, made of course textile and worn by philosophers as sign of disregard for elegance.

Tunica—the most basic under-garment for men and women, available in a wide variety of models and fabrics. It consists of a T-shaped, long shirt.

Tunica dalmatica—the long and wide variety of the tunic, named after its region of origin, Dalmatia.

Tunica talaris—the long variety of the tunic, reaching down to the ankles and worn by the Roman upper-middle class and higher.

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FIGURE 8.1 Christ surrounded by his apostles, Catacomb of Domitilla, Rome
SKETCH BY AUTHOR

FIGURE 8.2
The pallium, worn as a folded shawl
SKETCH BY AUTHOR

FIGURE 8.3
The casula
SKETCH BY AUTHOR

FIGURE 8.4 Emperor Justinian, Bishop Maximian and their train, San Vitale, Ravenna
PHOTO AUTHOR

FIGURE 8.5 Bishop Marianos of Faras under protection of the Holy Virgin, painting from Faras cathedral (early eleventh century)
NATIONAL MUSEUM, WARSAW

FIGURE 8.6 Emperor Johannes Kantakouzenos, presiding over a synod, with both monks and bishops wearing the monastic hood; Ms. Gr.1242, fol. 5 v, 33,5×24 cm
BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE, PARIS (HTTPS://COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKI/FILE:JOHN_VI_KANTAKOUZENOS.JPG)

CHAPTER 9

The Emergence of the Gallic Rogations in a Cognitive Perspective

Joop van Waarden

'Bishop Mamertus conceived of the entire Rogations in that holy night of the vigils of Easter'; these admiring words were written by his early-sixth-century successor in the see of Vienne, Avitus.[1] And a dramatic night it was, with fires breaking out in the city as the community gathered in church. Mamertus' subsequent miraculous intercession was believed to have prevented the worst, while his follow-up with recurrent collective rites of penance, the Rogations, turned out to appeal to the imagination of his fellow bishops: this practice took root in Frankish Gaul and beyond.

The emergence of the Rogations in Gaul is repeatedly, but elusively documented in late antique sources and it has, over time, been studied for its historical, ritual, and liturgical aspects. In this contribution, I would like to add another recent perspective, namely that of the Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR), which could explain the incongruities that emerge when we take a closer look at the pious sentiments and church-political aims at play in forging this ritual—and indeed at the character of the ritual itself.

First, as a reminder, I will sketch the genesis and early development of the Rogation Days in the broader context of ancient ritual practice (section 1). Secondly, a brief look at the sources will show some peculiarities in what only a biased ecclesiastic could believe was an unqualified success (2). I then out-

1 Alcimus Avitus *Homilia* 6 p. 110.20. The text has been edited by R. Peiper, *Alcimi Ecdicii Aviti Viennenis episcopi opera quae supersunt*, MGH AA 6.2 (Berlin 1883). Homily 6 has been translated with introduction and notes by D. Shanzer and I. Wood, *Avitus of Vienne: Letters and Selected Prose*, TTH vol. 38 (Liverpool 2002), 381–388. The metropolitan see of Vienne (*civitas Viennensium*), twenty miles south of Lyon on the left bank of the Rhône, is one of the oldest in Provence, contending for ecclesiastical primacy with Arles during much of the fifth century and politically harassed by the Burgundians, who captured it in the early 470s, when Avitus was the bishop. For Vienne's episcopal chronology, see L. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Paris 1907), 147–211. For Mamertus, see É. Griffe, *La Gaule chrétienne à l'époque romaine*, vol. 2 *L'église des Gaules au Ve siècle*, 2nd ed. (Paris 1966), 268–269. See also J.A. van Waarden, *Writing to Survive: A Commentary on Sidonius Apollinaris, Letters Book 7*, vol. 1 *The Episcopal Letters 1–11* (Leuven 2010), 70–74.

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line two interlocking methods of studying ritual from a cognitive perspective, i.e. Whitehouse's 'Modes' theory and McCauley and Lawson's 'Form' hypothesis (3). Finally, applying these theories to the problem of the birth of the Rogations, I hope to contribute to a better appreciation of what kind of ritual they were—which would explain the peculiarities I signalled as well as the ritual's strengths and weaknesses. This also goes a long way towards understanding why, historically, things went the way they did (4–5).

1 The Emergence of the Rogations in Gaul

In the Western church, Rogation Days, also known by the generic name of Litanies, are days of fasting and prayer in spring, associated with intercession especially for the harvest. The Rogations of the city of Rome, called 'Major Rogations' (*litaniae maiores*), on the feast of St. Mark on 25 April, have a different origin than the 'Minor Rogations' (*litaniae minores*), which originated in Gaul and then spread to Britain and Spain, and which are usually linked to Ascension Day.[2]

According to tradition, the Gallican Rogations were sparked by incidental civic disaster, turned to good use for communal cohesion, rather than by the typical need for yearly agricultural intercession, although, as we will see, the overall picture is blurred.[3] They comprised three days of collective

2 For the confusing terminology (the Gallican Rogations were sometimes called *litaniae maiores* as well), see J. Hill, 'The *Litaniae maiores* and *minores* in Rome, Francia, and Anglo-Saxon England: Terminology, Texts and Traditions', *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2000), 211–246. For Rogations outside Gaul, see F. Cabrol, 'Litanies', in *DACL*, vol. 9/2 (Paris 1930), 1540–1571; M. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints* (London 1991), esp. 1–61; Hill, 'The *Litaniae maiores* and *minores*'; J. Dyer, 'Roman Processions of the Major Litany (*litaniae maiores*) from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century', in É. Ó Carragáin and C. Neuman de Vegvar (eds), *Roma Felix: Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome* (Aldershot 2007), 113–138; J. Kramer, *Between Earth and Heaven: Liminality and the Ascension of Christ in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Manchester 2014), esp. 147–200, with literature on p. 188 n. 6. N.J. Ristuccia, *Christianization and Commonwealth in Early Medieval Europe: A Ritual Interpretation* (Oxford 2018) was published after this article was finalized. It focuses on the Rogation Days as 'a rich case study for understanding how mandatory rituals molded European communities' (3).

3 Secondary literature with special attention to the (Gallic) Rogations: H. Leclercq, 'Rogations', in *DACL*, vol. 14/2 (Paris 1948), 2459–2461; P. Siffrin, 'Rogazioni', in G. Pizzardo and P. Paschini (eds), *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, vol. 10 (Vatican City 1953), 1084–1086; É. Griffe, *La Gaule chrétienne à l'époque romaine*, vol. 3 *La cité chrétienne* (Paris 1965), 209–213; Y. Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul, A.D. 481–751* (Leiden 1995), esp. 63–64; H.G.E. Rose, *Missale Gothicum e codice Vaticano Reginensi latino 317 editum*, CCSL 159D (Turnhout 2005), 154; entry 'Rogation Days', in *ODCC* (Oxford 1997); G. Nathan, 'The Rogation Ceremonies of Late Antique

penance (prayer, psalm singing, processions, and abstinence from food, sex and work), their slot in the liturgical year being typically the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday preceding Ascension Day, thus strikingly interrupting the festive period of fifty days between Easter and Pentecost.[4] Here is how we can imagine what happened on these days:

> During Rogations, a procession of the people left the church, followed by the cathedral clergy and ultimately the bishop himself. Circumambulating the city in a procession, the participants thus instantiated the cathedral as a spiritual and cosmic point of gravity. Walking throughout the district, providing blessings of many kinds for the health of fields and cattle, for rain in drought or fair weather in a rainy season, the bishop spread his beneficence as broadly as possible. … It was felt that the people as a whole should make amends for their sins, because it was as a people that they needed the aid of heaven. Moving slowly and deliberately through the lanes, the procession disclosed a hierarchical model of society in which the liturgy served as a cohesive force, shaping the community and reinforcing local solidarity under episcopal government.[5]

Supposedly invented in the early 470s in Vienne (south of Lyon on the Rhône) by bishop Mamertus as Visigoths and Burgundians were breaking down the last remnants of Roman rule in Gaul, they were confirmed, as early as 511, for the entire Frankish kingdom on the authority of Clovis at the 'national' Frankish Council of Orléans. In the next section, we will look in greater detail at the early stages of the ritual.

As a ritual, the Rogation Days belong to the immemorial class of days of repentance and propitiation in times of war, during epidemics and natural

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Gaul: Creation, Transmission and the Role of the Bishop', *Classica et Mediaevalia* 49 (1998), 275–303; J.A. van Waarden, *Writing to Survive*, vol. 1, 77–80.

4 Calendar practice varied locally: in Arles, Caesarius kept to Wednesday to Friday (*Homilia* 209.4; before or after Ascension?); the week after Pentecost was another possibility which was advocated in Spain (Council of Gerona 517 CE, canon 2). For the unprecedented disruption of the *Quinquagesima* festive period, see H. Buchinger, 'Pentekost, Pfingsten und Himmelfahrt: Grunddaten und Fragen zur Frühgeschichte', in R.W. Bishop et al. (eds), *Preaching after Easter: Mid-Pentecost, Ascension, and Pentecost in Late Antiquity* (Leiden 2013), 15–84, esp. 70–71.

5 M.E. Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300–850* (Washington, DC, 2011), 185–186. An example of the prayers said at Rogation masses can be found in Missale Gothicum #327–352: three masses and a collection of prayers (in Rose, *Missale Gothicum*, 476–485; this collection was compiled c. 700); for other examples, see Hen, *Culture and Religion*, 64 n. 32.

disasters, and days to pray for growth and to prevent crop failure (or, complementarily, to thank the deity for prosperity, or at least that suffering had not been worse). In the Roman world, these included rites of propitiation (*supplicationes*) and purification (*lustrationes*) on such occasions as the occurrence of prodigies (*prodigia, portenta*), wars, and illness, or else to protect a town, its fields, and the crops (e.g., the *Robigalia* and the *Ambarvalia*).[6] The *Robigalia* (23–24 April) and the *Ambarvalia* (29 May) have both been proposed as the origin of the Gallic Rogations, the *Ambarvalia* most recently in 1998 by Geoffrey Nathan in his important article on the origin and transmission of the Rogations.[7] It remains problematic, however, to prove any direct descent, if only because these were Italic, not Gallic ceremonies. Even so, the similarity does not come as a surprise in the context of the progressive Christianization of the Roman calendar.[8]

2 Peculiarities in the Sources

The late antique sources take the framing of the origin and early development of the Rogations firmly in hand. It is an exclusive series of aristocratic bishops who direct our understanding: Sidonius Apollinaris of Clermont and Faustus of Riez in the late fifth century, Avitus of Vienne and Caesarius of Arles in the early sixth, and Gregory of Tours in the second half of that century.[9] Sidonius writes

6 For secondary literature on antique rites of propitiation and purification, see for instance, G. Wissowa, 'Ambarvalia', *RE* 1,2 (1894), 1796; F. Pfister, 'Robigalia', *RE* 1A,1 (1914), 949–951; W. Pax, 'Bittprozession', *RAC* 2 (1954), 422–429; V. Saladino, 'Purificazione: Mondo romano', in *ThesCRA*, vol. 2 (Los Angeles 2004), 63–87.

7 Nathan, 'The Rogation Ceremonies', 280–284, relies on a Rogation homily (text on 299–302) in a tenth-century manuscript (the homily itself is possibly older) which mentions the Ambarvalia; for this, see D. de Bruyne, 'L'origine des Processions de la Chandeleur et des Rogations: À propos d'un sermon inédit', *Revue Bénédictine* 39 (1922), 14–26.

8 On the Christianization of time (and space), see for instance R. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley, CA, 1985), 276–300; M.R. Salzman, *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, CA, 1990); M.-Y. Perrin, 'Le nouveau style missionnaire: la conquête de l'espace et du temps', in C. Pietri and L. Pietri (eds), *Histoire du Christianisme des origines à nos jours: Antiquité*, vol. 2 *Naissance d'une chrétienté (250–43)* (Paris 1995), 585–621 (also German edition (Freiburg 1996), 667–704); D. Hunt, 'The Church as Public Institution', in A. Cameron and P. Garnsey (eds), *CAH*, vol. 13 *The Late Empire, A.D. 337–425* (Cambridge 1998), 238–276.

9 (a) Two letters by Sidonius Apollinaris (430/32–479/85, bishop of Clermont since 469/70): *Epistula* 5.14 (from beginning 473?) and 7.1 (from 473/74?); (b) a sermon, possibly by Faustus of Riez (bishop c. 460–c. 490): *Collectio Gallicana* 25 'in Litaniis'; (c) four sermons by Avitus of Vienne (bishop c. 494–c. 518): *Homilia* 6–9 'in Rogationibus' and 'die I, II, III Rogationum';

letters on the Rogations to two members of his distinguished circle, while Faustus,[10] Avitus (a cousin of Sidonius'), and Caesarius address their communities in a number of homilies on the occasion, and Gregory (a native of Clermont) retells the story in his hagiographically tinged *History of the Franks*. The dossier is completed by canon 27 of the Council of Orléans of 511, which promoted a stylized version of the Rogations as an officially approved marker of 'Frankishness', under the watchful eye of king Clovis:

> Rogationes, id est laetanias, ante ascensionem Domini ab omnibus ecclesiis placuit celebrari, ita ut praemissum triduanum ieiunium in Domenicae ascensionis festivitate solvatur; per quod triduum servi et ancellae ab omni opere relaxentur, quo magis plebs universa conveniat. Quo triduo omnis absteneant et quadraginsimalibus cibis utantur.[11]
>
> It was decided that the Rogations, i.e., the Litanies, should be celebrated by all churches prior to the Lord's Ascension so that the preceding three-day fast ends on the Feast of the Lord's Ascension; during these three days, slaves and maid-servants should be released from all work to enable the entire people to gather. In these three days, everybody should be abstinent and eat Lenten food.

What this dossier does—as opposed to the broad, historically and liturgically informed picture in the preceding section—is to narrow our vision to a contemporary, top-down image of what the bishops in charge wanted to happen, and believed was happening. What we get here is the leading ideology and its related policy, uncovering the presuppositions, intentions, and instruments of the responsible actors at an essential turn in mental and ecclesiastical history.[12] Seeing what they were doing and aiming at, our next question will be: could

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(d) seven sermons by Caesarius of Arles (bishop 502–542): *Homilia* 144 'in Letaniis', 146 'in Letaniis', 157 'in die tertia Rogationum', 160a 'secunda die Rogationum', 207 'de Letania', 208 'in Letaniis', 209 'de Letania'; (e) canon 27 of the Council of Orléans (511 CE); (f) Gregory of Tours (538/39–594), *Historia Francorum* 2.34 (compare *Liber Vitae Patrum 6* for a similar story about Gregory's uncle Gallus, a later bishop of Clermont). Ado of Vienne (bishop 850–874), *Chronicon*, PL 123, 102C–103A, echoes Avitus' account.

10 For my hypothesis that it is Faustus, and a proviso as to his identity in this case, see below n. 19.

11 C. de Clercq (ed.), *Concilia Galliae a. 511–a. 695*, CCSL, vol. 148A (Turnhout 1963), 12.

12 For the lay religious perspective, as far as we can reconstruct it, see L.K. Bailey, *The Religious Worlds of the Laity in Late Antique Gaul* (London 2016).

they have chosen differently? To unravel this knot, I will then use the cognitive perspective on ritual.

The following peculiarities appear in these letters and sermons:

(a) The ritual originated in the mind of a charismatic bishop in a traumatic situation. Bishop Mamertus—a member of Sidonius' inner circle, incidentally—is depicted as inventing the Rogations amid the psychological and material havoc wrought in the town of Vienne by earthquakes, fires, strange sounds at night, and the intrusion of wild animals.[13] When everybody flees, he alone resists on several occasions (Sidonius, *Epistula* 7.1.3):

> *fides tua in illo ardore plus caluit*
>
> your faith burned even stronger amid that conflagration.

His tears always quench the flames. Avitus adds to the point by concentrating on the Vigil of Easter. After a disastrous year, he recounts, the community is assembled in church, tensely expecting God to turn the tide in that holy night. As the opposite happens (fires are again reported and everybody rushes out to save what can be saved) the saintly bishop Mamertus remains at the altar and 'quenches the power of the flames with the flood of his tears' (*Homilia* 6 p. 110.16 Peiper). In private conversation with God, he decides to institute the Rogations.

(b) The ritual aims to stabilize the community by channelling fears and apprehensions (related to hunger, illness, and war), bridging the gap between the rich and mighty and the common man.[14] In his initial initiative, Mamertus very much wanted to maintain local political stability, because, under outward pressure, the city was being torn apart between the interests of the leading body and the population—a tension which is developed in detail in both Sidonius' and Avitus' accounts (*Ep*. 7.1 and *Hom*. 6 respectively). Faustus mentions both the acute impact of two suc-

13 Sidonius *Epistula* 7.1.3–6; Alcimus Avitus *Homilia* p. 109.4–111.12 Peiper; Gregory of Tours *Historia Francorum* 2.34. See also van Waarden, *Writing to Survive*, vol. 1, 94–119. The historical context may be the Burgundian offensive which resulted in the capture of Vienne in c. 471/72.

14 It should be noted that in current Ritual Studies research, Durkheim's claim that rituals promote social cohesion is controversial (with a significant move to the contrary, though—ritual as the basic act that grounds religion and society—by Rappaport). I will not engage in this discussion here if only because the sources themselves indicate social cohesion as being among Mamertus' principal drives. See also below n. 45.

cessive Visigothic raids (*Homilia* 25.2) and the seasonal dangers of plague, hail, and drought; the ritual is to implore *elementorum pacem cum temporum tranquillitate*, 'peace of the elements as well as tranquillity of the times' (section 1). Caesarius specifically mentions drought and the wish for peace and prosperity (*Homilia* 208.2). In Avitus' time the spur of current urgency has evidently grown less, as he highlights only moral cleansing.

To summarize this point: the picture of the character, application, and acceptance of the ritual is diffuse. In Lisa Bailey's words: 'The clergy might have been aiming at consensus and unity, two of the goals often claimed for ritual acts, but ritual was an *argument* for such consensus, not an enactment of it'.[15] Over time, bishops with differing agendas dealt with congregations who interpreted their needs in their own way, and often did not hesitate to act according to their own taste.[16]

(c) The predominance of the didactic aspect and the emphasis on personal ethics and renunciation. We might expect to see vivid pictures of the Rogation ceremonies. The opposite is the case. We 'see' nothing; the word *processio* is mentioned only once as Mamertus tentatively starts his experiment with a gathering on the outskirts of the town (Alcimus Avitus, *Hom.* 6 p. 110.39).[17] Instead, the focus is on sin, punishment, and penitence throughout. There are moral lessons to be learnt. The clue is driven home most poignantly by Caesarius (*Hom.* 207.3):

> *si peccata nostra cessarent, statim flagella nobis debita divina misericordia removeret*
>
> if our sins were to end, God's mercy would at once remove the scourges we merit.

15 Bailey, *The Religious Worlds of the Laity*, 105.

16 I agree with Bailey, *The Religious Worlds of the Laity*, 113–115 (on the Rogations).

17 Compare a similar miracle *cum* procession during Lent in Clermont, described by Gregory of Tours in *Liber Vitae Patrum 6* (see also n. 9 above). Gregory here uses the word *rogationes* for a 40-mile pilgrimage from Clermont to St. Julian's tomb in Brioude, instigated by bishop Gallus: *rogationes* [!] *illas instituit, ut media Quadragesisma* [!] *psallendo ad basilicam beati Iuliani martyris itinere pedestri venirent*, 'he established those supplication days at which, in the midst of Lent, they went on foot to the church of the blessed martyr Julian, singing psalms'. (Incidentally, Sidonius gives an interesting insight into community life on similar occasions in *Ep.* 5.17, where he describes a day together at the tomb of St. Just in Lyon, but that was not a Rogation ceremony.)

Hence the constant attention to prayer, fasting, and alms: 'let us pay closer attention to the well-being of our soul' (*de salute animae nostrae adtentius cogitemus*, Caesarius, *Hom.* 209.4).

(d) In a broader sense, Mamertus' Rogations were neither unique nor the first of their kind. In Clermont, for example, Sidonius signals earlier Christian propitiatory rites (*Ep.* 5.14.2):

> *vagae tepentes infrequentesque utque sic dixerim oscitabundae supplicationes*
>
> irregular propitiations, lukewarm, sparsely attended, and, so to speak, full of yawns.

The point is that such rituals risk becoming ineffective and boring. Sidonius is enthusiastic about the fresh start with novel Rogations,[18] although he must admit immediately that they have not yet produced the resounding effect they did in Vienne (*Ep.* 7.1.2: *non effectu pari*). People's reluctance and apathy run as an undercurrent through the sermons the bishops preach at the Rogations. After Visigothic raids, Faustus is forced to counter the despondency of his audience who keep asking '*Quid nobis profuit?*'; 'What is the use of our toil, of our sighing and weeping? What is the use of our prayers and our heartfelt commitment to contrition?'[19] While disappointment is tricky, repetitiveness is potentially even more threatening to any ritual. In Arles, Caesarius' flock has obviously seen enough of it. Caesarius then resorts to the proven method of reinforcing the stimulus, demanding probably more than his community was generally prepared to do. They must wage an all-out war against the demons,

18 No longer simply 'for rain or for fine weather', but an intense 'festival of humbly bowed heads' (*Ep.* 5.14.2–3).

19 Ps.-Eusebius *Collectio Gallicana Homiliarum* 25.2 (the collection was edited by F. Glorie, CCSL, vols. 101, 101A, and 101B (Turnhout 1970–1971)). On this sermon collection, see L.K. Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success* (Notre Dame, IN, 2010). On Faustus of Riez, see R. Barcellona, *Fausto di Riez interprete del suo tempo: Un vescovo tardoantico dentro la crisi dell'impero* (Soveria Mannelli 2006), and M. Neri, *Dio, l'anima e l'uomo: L'epistolario di Fausto di Riez* (Rome 2011), esp. 16 n. 16 on the attribution to Faustus of sermons from the *Collectio Gallicana*. I venture to surmise that *Hom.* 25 could be by Faustus, and thus from Riez, based on the historical directness (*in prima … Gothica vice …; in secunda …*, 'in the first … second … Gothic assault', which would date the sermon between the temporary seizure of Arles, Marseille, and surroundings in 473 by the Visigoths and the final surrender in 476, followed by Faustus' exile) and the authoritative tone which befits a senior bishop in times of war.

he insists (*Hom.* 207.1); the Rogations are a three-day campaign against the sins of the community incurred over the year (*Hom.* 207.3). This is absolutely vital (*Hom.* 209.4):

> *rogo vos, fratres, et admoneo simulque contestor, ut in his tribus diebus … nullus se ab ecclesiae conventu subducat*
>
> I ask you, brothers, and admonish and beseech you that during these three days nobody shirk from rallying in church.

Not coming (and staying …) is nothing less than desertion from the army of Christ (*Hom.* 207.2).[20] However, it is doubtful whether this power play convinced many who were not already convinced within his own faction: enforcing another repetitive liturgical obligation[21] alongside so many others may well have been contrary to the interests of people who often had to cope on a daily subsistence level,[22] or indeed of rich members of the community who may have been tempted to retire to the *otium* of their *villae*, like Sidonius' addressee in *Ep.* 5.14.[23]

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20 The Caesarius edition is by G. Morin, *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis sermones*, CCSL, vols. 103 and 104 (Turnhout 1953). The standard monograph is W.E. Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge 1994).

21 Continuing Mamertus' tradition in the see of Vienne, Avitus points to repetition as a vital element of the Rogations, designed by Mamertus to anchor them beyond the first enthusiasm: Alcimus Avitus *Hom.* 6 p. 110.32 Peiper *vinculum consuetudinis*, 'the commitment/force of habit', *Hom.* 7 p. 113.4 Peiper *nobis annuum quoddam iter … currentibus*, '(the Rogations are a comfort to) us who, so to say, speed along the yearly road (of our lives)'.

22 See Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, 177–178. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, 290–294, has pointed out that 'the demands of the liturgy could, for many people, conflict with the demands of working the land' even though, as 'most communities lived on a subsistence level', the reassuring coincidence of the agrarian cycle and the liturgical year was welcomed in principle. As for Mamertus' Rogations, '[a]t the time his innovation may have been an attempt at synchronizing liturgical and ecological time again; but once established, the rogations were merely another fixed annual ceremony that men were expected to observe'. On the vast expansion of the religious calendar in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, see Hen, *Culture and Religion*, 61–153.

23 An important study on *otium* is still J.-M. André, *L'otium dans la vie morale et intellectuelle Romaine. Des origines à l'époque augustéenne* (Paris 1966). On the late antique Christian *secessus in villam* of the nobility, see J. Fontaine, 'Valeurs antiques et valeurs chrétiennes dans la spiritualité des grands propriétaires terriens à la fin du IVe siècle occidental', in J. Fontaine and C. Kannengiesser (eds), *Epektasis. Mélanges patristiques offerts au Cardinal Jean Daniélou* (Paris 1972), 571–595.

(e) Finally, the continuity with 'pagan', classical Roman propitiatory rituals is apparent. Along with the persistent perception of natural phenomena like fires and earthquakes as warning signs and the need to remedy them, the terminology is the same: *terrores*, *prodigia*, *supplicationes* (Sidonius); *supplicationes* (Faustus); *terrores, prodigiosus*, *portenta* (Avitus); *terrores, prodigia*, *portenta* (Gregory).[24] Pagan ritual, among other means of purification, likewise includes processions, prayers, and abstinence: in Christianity, however, the notion of conscience is added.[25]

3 Ritual Studies and CSR

The field of Ritual Studies, mapped in exemplary fashion by Catherine Bell in the 1990s,[26] has lately seen the budding of a new, cognitive branch originating in the Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR).[27] The discipline of CSR studies

24 Cf., for instance Livy 3.5.14–15 *caelum visum est ardere plurimo igni,* portenta*que alia aut obversata oculis aut vanas exterritis ostentavere species. his avertendis* terroribus *in triduum* [!] *feriae indictae, per quas omnia delubra pacem deum exposcentium virorum mulierumque turba inplebantur*, 'the sky was seen to blaze with numerous fires, and other portents either were actually seen or were due to the illusions of the terror-stricken observers. To avert these alarms a three days' season of prayer was ordered, and during this period all the shrines were crowded with a throng of men and women beseeching the pardon of the gods'; 3.10.6 *eo anno caelum ardere visum, terra ingenti concussa motu est.* [...] *inter alia* prodigia *et carne pluit*, 'this year the heavens were seen to blaze, and the earth was shaken with an enormous quake. Among other portents there was even a rain of flesh'; 10.23.1 *eo anno* prodigia *multa fuerunt, quorum averruncandorum causa* supplicationes *in biduum senatus decrevit*, 'in that year were many portents, to avert which the senate decreed supplications for two days'.

25 See Saladino, 'Purificazione', 78–85. For the Christian 'interiorization of faith' (Charles Taylor) and the ascetic trend, see J.A. van Waarden, *Writing to Survive: A Commentary on Sidonius Apollinaris, Letters Book 7*, vol. 2 *The Ascetic Letters 12–18* (Leuven 2016), 4–5.

26 C. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford 1997). As to the cognitive take on ritual, the book only discusses McCauley and Lawson's first major, Chomsky-inspired publication, *Rethinking Religion: Connecting Cognition and Culture* (Cambridge 1990) (on 68–70).

27 The name Cognitive Science of Religion was coined by J.L. Barrett, 'Exploring the Natural Foundations of Religion', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 4 (2000), 29–34. Apart from Thomas Lawson, Robert McCauley, and Harvey Whitehouse, on whom I draw in this contribution, the field features different approaches by scholars like Pascal Boyer (*Religion Explained: The Evolutionary Origins of Religious Thought* (New York 2001)), Armin Geertz ('Cognitive Approaches to the Study of Religion', in P. Antes et al. (eds), *New Approaches to the Study of Religion*, vol. 2 *Textual, Comparative, Sociological, and Cognitive Approaches* (Berlin 2004), 347–399), and Dan Sperber (*Rethinking Symbolism* (Cambridge 1975)).

religious thought and behaviour from a cognitive and evolutionary perspective. Building upon, and extending, earlier research within anthropology and sociology of religion, it applies the results of present-day brain science to the questions as to how religion is acquired, how it develops, and how it is transmitted, seeking answers to questions like: 'Which basic human cognitive factors caused things to go the way they did and not otherwise?', and 'How did patterns of storing and retrieval of information, the way memory works, condition the survival of some traditions and the demise of other ones?' Cognitive approaches are particularly useful to investigate the transmission of traditions, ritual, and magic. They are being deployed, among other fields, in New Testament studies and the early development of Christianity.[28] My aim is to apply the two dominant—and largely converging—cognitive theories of ritual, one by Harvey Whitehouse, the other by Robert McCauley and Thomas Lawson, to the development of the Rogations.[29]

3.1 *Whitehouse's Modes Theory*

Whitehouse, in his Ritual Frequency Hypothesis, or Modes Theory,[30] distinguishes two contrasting modes of religiosity: doctrinal and imagistic. Religious traditions typically tend to be either large-scale, highly organized, socially diffuse, reliant on rhetoric and narrative to acquire meaning (doctrinal mode), or small-scale, non-centralized, socially intense, and reliant on the internal creation of meaning (imagistic mode). The amount of sensory stimulation, and resulting emotional excitement, which a ritual incorporates is inversely proportional to its performance frequency. The doctrinal mode is high-frequency, low-arousal; the imagistic mode is low-frequency, with high arousal. The memory system addressed in the doctrinal mode is semantic memory, used for

28 See I. Czachesz and T. Biró (eds), *Changing Minds: Religion and Cognition through the Ages* (Leuven 2011); I. Czachesz and R. Uro (eds), *Mind, Morality and Magic: Cognitive Science Approaches in Biblical Studies* (Durham 2013); I. Czachesz, *Cognitive Science and the New Testament: A New Approach* (Oxford 2016); R. Uro, *Ritual and Christian Beginnings: A Socio-Cognitive Analysis* (Oxford 2016); R. Uro et al. (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Ritual* (Oxford) 2018.

29 In doing so, it will become clear how dynamic their theoretical distinctions in fact are. The tension between the models and their application sparks a creative expansion, if not adjustment, of their definitions. See below, section 5.2 with n. 45.

30 H. Whitehouse, *Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission* (Walnut Creek, CA, 2004), a further development of his anthropological insights can be found in *Arguments and Icons: Divergent Modes of Religiosity* (Oxford 2000). See also H. Whitehouse and J. Laidlaw (eds), *Ritual and Memory: Toward a Comparative Anthropology of Religion* (Walnut Creek, CA, 2004).

definitions, whereas the imagistic mode addresses episodic/flashbulb memory, which stores experiences.[31]

3.2 *McCauley and Lawson's Form Theory*

While acknowledging this distinction, McCauley and Lawson believe they have found a more fundamental principle in their Ritual Form Theory.[32] They hold that the level of emotion a religious ritual evokes (and consequently the degree of its ability to transmit religious experiences and convictions) is determined by what form it takes in their categorization of the principles of 'superhuman agency' and 'superhuman immediacy'—which works as follows. In mentally processing rituals, participants and observers will apply the 'action representation system' of seeing an *agent* performing an *action* on a *patient* to bring about some non-natural consequence by appealing to superhuman agency. God (or the ancestors or a saint: the 'culturally postulated superhuman agent') occupies one of these slots, i.e. is most closely associated with either the agent, the action/instrument, or the patient role. In real life, an ordained person (e.g., a priest) acts on the god's behalf: the more intimately linked the better (principle of 'superhuman immediacy'). This makes for three types of ritual: 1. 'special agent rituals' in which the god is the agent and people are patients (e.g. wedding, baptism, consecration; associated with relatively high levels of 'sensory pageantry'); 2. 'special instrument rituals' in which the instrument represents the god (e.g., holy water, relics); 3. 'special patient rituals' in which the god is the *patiens* and humans are the agents (e.g., sacrifice, prayer, procession). Special agent rituals are intuitively perceived as the most effective and permanent; they are not repeatable in the specific original constellation (e.g., no second baptism), but can be ritually reversed (e.g., deconsecration). Special instrument and special patient rituals, however, may—and must—be repeated because they are less effective as the agents are ordinary humans. Thus according to McCauley and Lawson, frequency, which Whitehouse considers to be the primary modal distinction, is a derivative function of ritual form.

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31 For a useful table of these variables, see Whitehouse, *Modes of Religiosity*, 74.

32 R.N. McCauley and E.T. Lawson, *Bringing Ritual to Mind: Psychological Foundations of Cultural Forms* (Cambridge 2002), a further development of their *Rethinking Religion: Connecting Cognition and Culture* (Cambridge 1990). For a comparison between Whitehouse's and McCauley and Lawson's theories, see R.N. McCauley, 'Rituals, Memory, and Emotion: Comparing Two Cognitive Hypotheses', in J. Andresen (ed.), *Religion in Mind: Cognitive Perspectives on Religious Belief, Ritual, and Experience* (Cambridge 2001), 115–140.

4 CSR Applied to the Rogations

If we turn again to the Rogations and the peculiarities uncovered in section 2, the Modes and Ritual Form theories enable us to view these various aspects and tendencies from a distance, so to speak, and make sense of them as a whole.

As propitiatory and atonement rituals go, the Rogation Days are, in terms of McCauley and Lawson's Form theory, 'special patient' rituals: they act on the punishing god to obtain his grace and avert (further) calamity. As we have seen, special patient rituals, performed by humans, are less effective than special agent rituals through which the god himself intervenes; therefore (possibly frequent) repetition is an essential characteristic of special patient rituals. Actually, repetition was envisaged by Mamertus from the outset as he realized that proclaiming the Rogations alone would not work,

> *nisi inter initia etiam vinculum consuetudinis adsignaret*
>
> unless, from the outset, he also assigned the commitment of habit.[33]

But repetition also makes this ritual vulnerable: if, despite repetition, it does not work, scepticism begins to grow; as the crisis recedes into the past, people are no longer willing to commit themselves completely, or else, as the ritual becomes no more than an (official) habit, boredom seeps in—what McCauley and Lawson call the 'tedium effect'. Scepticism is seen immediately in Faustus, evolving over time into passivity and a lack of interest in Avitus' and Caesarius' days, as people are reluctant to come to church all the time and participate in a ritual which is primarily desired by the bishop.

One way of countering the dullness of the present and bringing back the vividness of the beginning is to recall the 'flashbulb' experience that started it all, in this case the revelatory moment of the Easter Vigil, which is vividly recalled by Avitus, who expands upon the first account by Sidonius.[34] This is the one-off, iconic event, typically stored in episodic memory, of Whitehouse's 'imagistic' mode. It also has traits of McCauley and Lawson's 'special agent' form in that the bishop, Mamertus, was in direct contact with God: recalling

33 Alcimus Avitus *Hom.* 6 p. 110.31 Peiper; see also above, n. 21.

34 See introductory section. In Sidonius, its function is to enhance the profile of the aristocratic bishops who, like Mamertus and himself, are involved in the turmoil of the Roman-Germanic conflict. The same story in Gregory of Tours serves the purpose of fleshing out Avitus' prestige as bishop of Vienne and spiritual mentor of the Burgundian kings through the miraculous events in his see before him.

the story, for a moment, makes God's immediacy palpable again.[35] The founding tale is told to reveal the unforgettable, transcendent background to human hassle and the toil of fasting. It should be noted, however, that the founding tale as such is not part of the Rogations ritual. In Avitus, it is a rhetorical means of magnifying and solemnizing the occasion, textual pageantry, so to say, as a substitute for the sensory pageantry of the ritual proper.

The Rogations have, or soon acquire, a strong doctrinal character. They involve a lot of preaching. The active part, the procession itself, is barely visible and rarely discussed; the aim evidently is an increasingly pervasive ethical disciplining of the collective. These aspects belong to Whitehouse's 'doctrinal' mode: less emotionally exciting rituals in a centralized group within a given theological framework (processed in semantic memory). Now, this in itself is an important indicator of the relative depth of Christianization at the time: at least in the largely urban context of our sources, there is clearly the momentum for bishops to gradually build a Christian civic community.[36] For this to happen and the ritual to have an impact, repetition is an important prerequisite and, consequently, it is regulated liturgically by the bishops and even sanctioned 'nationally' by the Council of Orléans. It remains to be seen whether the Rogations, as a yearly ritual, qualify for low sensory stimulation (and resulting lower emotional excitement) as predicted by Whitehouse's form theory, proportionally to any heightened performance frequency. However, fasting was common enough in the liturgical year, typically on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and was prolonged and intensified in the weeks preceding Christmas and Easter. Also, the fasts linked to the seasons (Ember Days, Quatertemper) developed early (we have just seen a trace of them in Sidonius' own Clermont where they had ebbed away).[37] So the Rogations, for all their collective and intensified drive, were basically more of the same, and not as exciting as the bishops would have their flocks believe. Moreover, all kinds of seasonal ritual, abstinence and processions were already familiar in the pagan context. It was, in fact, the very same semi-magical world people were used to live in. More of the same, we might ask, was that a good idea for bishops who were intent on forging profoundly Christianized and resilient communities?

35 Both 'superhuman agency' and 'superhuman immediacy' are indirectly deployed.

36 See Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*.

37 For an introduction and literature, see *ODCC* (Oxford[3] 1997), 599–600 s.v. 'fasts and fasting'.

4.1 *Alternatives?*

Could they have done otherwise? I do not mean to speculate about a 'what if' scenario, which is not very constructive in historiography. Yet the question is relevant in order to focus the cognitive model even more precisely. According to CSR, every religion has alternative options. The most effective option is a situation in which the agent-side of the ritual is strengthened so that the deity is felt to intervene directly, by lifting people above reality via the stimulation of new ecstatic experiences, by introducing new festivals with a lot of sensory pageantry, by celebrating existing ones even more exuberantly.[38] Here, however, the opposite happens, with heavy emphasis being placed on the here and now, on the mundane even: attendance, discipline, repentance, living a Christian life—'deeds', says Caesarius, 'not only faith':

> *quasi nos sine bonis operibus sola fides possit in diem iudicii liberare*
>
> as though faith alone without good works can liberate us on the Day of Judgement.[39]

The essence is expiating one's sins and thereby avoiding natural disasters which are interpreted as divine punishment. It is acting on the deity rather than letting the deity act on you—it is a matter of strengthening the patient side.

If there was any period or any region apt to experiment and make a fresh start, it was fifth-century Gaul, torn away as it was from the empire and embarking on the 'new deal' of the successor kingdoms, full of peril and unrest, and a playing field for the aristocracy seeking to shift its influence from the now inaccessible imperial administration to governing the local church. Yet again, what we see happening is the reinforcement of age-old tendencies of propitiatory rituals instead of the creation of exciting new ones.

The theory states that for any religious system to last it should be 'balanced' by comprising both special agent and special instrument/patient elements.[40] The emergence of the Rogations shows that in fifth- and sixth-century Gaul an increase of special patient ritual was apparently felt to be required in the

38 For the example of new, high-arousal special agent rituals in millennial religious movements, see H. Whitehouse, *Inside the Cult: Religious Innovation and Transmission in Papua New Guinea* (Oxford 1995), 130, and R.N. McCauley, *Why Religion is Natural and Science is Not* (Oxford 2011), 205. Uro, *Ritual and Christian Beginnings*, 87, shows that special agent rituals are not necessarily only one-off rites de passage (as in McCauley & Lawson's basic scheme), but can also be repeatable.

39 Caesarius of Arles *Hom.* 209.3.

40 See McCauley and Lawson, *Bringing Ritual to Mind*, 180–182.

development of the liturgical year to keep the system balanced, given quickly evolving outward circumstances and a changing mentality. In their unspectacular inwardness, these acts of communal penance express an important aspect of the late antique and early medieval periods, when introspection, work on the soul, and containment of the body became mainstream.[41]

4.2 *The Cult of Saints and Relics*

If anything, special agent rituals that include ecstatic movements in the imagistic mode are difficult to frame and to control. Significantly, Mamertus' flash of inspiration which sparked the tradition is reserved for this particular bishop, and is immediately transformed into something comprehensible and regular. Significantly, too, laypeople seem not to have been able to act as religious virtuosi in their own right, starting a grass-roots movement.[42] Fifth-century Christianity was already so established that its rituals were unthinkable other than as an extension of the existing situation: consolidation, no experiments. Nevertheless, endless preaching and the repeated emphasis on sin and disasters risk causing depression, reluctance, or simply tedium. That is why, in addition, what I would style a middle course is stimulated, complementing special patient rituals like the Rogations: the worship of saints and relics.[43] Here, the sacred is both close to the divine agent (through his *praesentia* via the saint: special agent) and palpable in the ritual by means of the saint's tomb and relics (special instrument), and that is as fascinating and uplifting as it is manageable.[44] This 'middle course' implies the strengthening and extension of an in-between

41 See R.A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge 1990). How this works out in pastoral practice is shown by Bailey, *Christianity's Quiet Success*. For the ascetic element, see van Waarden, *Writing to Survive*, vol. 2, 3–5.

42 In Spain, Priscillian's charismatic movement, led by a nobleman made bishop, and garnering considerable popular support, comes closest to the things I suggest might have happened in uprooted Gaul. But then, Priscillian was brought down all the same. On the varying interpretations of the movement's social embedding, see J.A. van Waarden, 'Priscillian of Avila's *Liber ad Damasum* and the Inability to Handle a Conflict', in A.C. Geljon and R. Roukema (eds), *Violence in Ancient Christianity: Victims and Perpetrators*, VCS 125 (Leiden 2014), 132–150. See also D. Piay Augusto, '*… Exim in Gallaeciam Priscillianistarum Haeresis invasit*. The Success of Priscillianism in Gallaecia Following the Trials at Trier', *Klio* 98 (2016) 634–652, who, in this and preceding publications, sees the wealthy *possessores* as Priscillian's mainstay.

43 The promotion of the cult of saints such as St. Martin and St. Germanus was a central concern to fifth- and sixth-century bishops in Gaul; see Van Dam, *Leadership and Community*, 177–300. It should not come as a surprise that this is thematized in our very first source for the Rogation Days: Sidonius' letter 7.1 ends with bargaining about the relics of St. Julian between Clermont and Vienne.

44 See above, section 4.2.

'special agent—special instrument' category. It favours a highly personal, tactile, and hence effective experience, as close to the divine as can be.[45] Moreover, special patient and special instrument rituals often coincide, as penitential processions with relics or celebrations at the tombs of saints during epidemics show.[46]

5 Conclusion

CSR enables us to see the Rogations in a new light for the kind of ritual they are, and allows us to gauge what that means for the historical appreciation of the development of ritual in the fifth- and sixth-century church. Projected against the matrix of Whitehouse's Modes theory, they show the largely doctrinal imprint they were given by the bishops, only brought into relief by the remembrance of the imagistic heuristic moment. A relatively low level of arousal, external appropriation by the community through frequent preaching, dynamic leadership, and a tendentiously centralized structure are all characteristic of the doctrinal mode. Projected against McCauley and Lawson's Ritual Form paradigm, the Rogations emerge as a special patient ritual which, rather than evoking overpowering divine agency and immediacy, stimulates believers to act upon God to gain his favour, which is a never-ending repetitive process, as soothing as it is exposed to the tedium effect.

Firmly in line with the pagan tradition, the Rogations, for all their one-sidedness, acquired and maintained their distinctive place in the temporal cycle thanks to the fact that they were balanced by that other focal point, the cult of saints and relics, and the expanding sanctoral cycle—a special patient feature of liturgy was thus complemented by a special instrument, one that channelled divine presence in a more direct and 'imagistic' way.

45 There is an intimate connection with the 'special agent' category, which almost makes saints and relics a middle category between 1 and 2. Peter Brown speaks about the cult of the saints as 'the joining of Heaven and Earth' (*The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago 1981), 1).

46 In this way, a varying degree of commitment of the individual to the community is made possible; see H. Whitehouse and J.A. Lanman, 'The Ties That Bind Us: Ritual, Fusion, and Identification', *Current Anthropology* 55 (2014), 674–695. In order to test the claim that collective rituals bind groups together, they distinguish 'identity fusion', blurring the psychological boundaries between self and other (e.g., in kinship; processed in episodic memory), from 'group identification', i.e. more distanced coalitional thinking (processed in semantic memory).

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CHAPTER 10

'Father, Give Me a Word': Transforming Traditions and Spiritual Direction in Early Christian Monasticism

Nienke M. Vos

In many sources about early Christian monasticism we stumble upon the phenomenon of spiritual direction: ascetic men and women who are in want of spiritual advice turn to more experienced ascetics for guidance.[1] Especially the sayings of the desert fathers and mothers, the so-called *Apophthegmata Patrum*, contain scenes of brothers in search of wisdom visiting their *abba*s.[2] In my contribution, I will first focus on the practice of spiritual direction from the perspective of a famous sentence: 'Father, give me a word'.[3] I propose to interpret the practice of asking and receiving such a word of guidance as ritualized behaviour that has its roots in the multicultural context of late antiquity. In doing so, I follow Rianne Voogd's definition of 'ritual' as a recognized pattern of behaviour that is repeated, communal, and physical.[4] While the first part of this article focuses on the ritual of spiritual direction as exemplified by the sayings, the second half will discuss various settings to which the practice of monastic guidance and its source material can be related, such as Greek philosophy and rhetoric, but also early Christian traditions of pastoral care as found in the correspondence of both Palestinian monks and the apostle Paul. Finally, I will trace the reception history of the ascetic approach to spiritual direction by

1 See, for instance, William Harmless, *Desert Christians. An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism* (Oxford 2004), 60, 65–69, 171–175, 177–178.

2 See Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 171–173. This first reference to the foreign technical term is in italics; later references are in roman type unless the word is part of either a quotation which has *abba* (italicized) or a longer sentence which is italicized (Greek in transcription). To be clear: in early Christianity both men and women demonstrated an interest in ascetic practice and ideals; in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (*AP*) we come across sayings by desert fathers *and* mothers (the so-called *amma's*). The *AP* does not, however, describe female ascetics or 'sisters' seeking spiritual advice as a counterpart to brothers/disciples asking questions (of either an abba or amma). Cf. Harmless, 440–445.

3 Cf., for example, Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 171. My research in this article concerns instances of direct speech.

4 See the article by Rianne Voogd in this volume, 'Is the Instruction to Greet One Another with a Holy Kiss a Pauline Transformation?', section 3.

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considering its impact on notions of penance found in early sources from the British Isles. Thus, in what follows I will first provide the necessary background to the sayings in terms of both text and context (section 1). I will then present a number of cases in which the well-known words quoted above are instantiated. This research on the specific wording pertains primarily to the ritual aspect of our theme, while it also leaves room for interpreting transformation as spiritual growth (section 2). Subsequently, I will widen the scope and consider more encompassing notions of transformation, in terms of both origin and impact, with reference to both Greek education (section 3) and the broad tradition of Christian pastoral care (sections 4 and 5). In my conclusion (section 6), I will summarize my findings and show how the practice of monastic spiritual direction can be interpreted as a transformative ritual in more than one sense.

1 Setting the Scene: Text and Context of the Desert Sayings

The textual tradition of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* is a complicated one.[5] The scholarly consensus is that many sayings originated in Scetis, a monastic settlement south-east of Alexandria, situated in the desert. According to tradition, it was founded during the first half of the fourth century CE by Macarius the Egyptian, also known as Macarius the Great, who must not be confused with his namesake Macarius the Alexandrian (though the two often are conflated in the sources).[6] Originally spoken in Coptic, the sayings were at some point written down in Greek and eventually compiled. This happened probably in the course of the fifth or sixth century in Palestine, after Scetis had been destroyed by raiders in the first half of the fifth century. Eventually, more

5 I rely on Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 169–175 for the following. John Wortley also offers valuable introductions to and summaries of the issues at hand, in the introduction to this translation of the sayings entitled *Give Me a Word: The Alphabetical Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (New York 2014), 13–22, and in an article entitled 'What the Desert Fathers meant by "being saved"', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 12 (2008), 286–307, especially in footnotes 1 and 4 (286–287). See also Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (Oxford 1993); Claudia Rapp, 'The origins of hagiography and the literature of early monasticism: purpose and genre between tradition and innovation', in Christopher Kelly, Richard Flower, and Michael Stuart Williams (eds), *Unclassical traditions. Volume 1: Alternatives to the classical past in late antiquity* (Cambridge 2010), 119–130; and Claudia Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation": reflections on the rise of the holy man in late antiquity', in J. Howard-Johnston and P.A. Hayward (eds), *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown* (Oxford 1999), 63–81.

6 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 173–174.

than 1,600 sayings were transmitted in two major collections: the Alphabetical Collection, which was ordered alphabetically on the basis of the fathers' names, and the Systematic Collection, which was organized thematically. In the course of time, anonymous sayings were included in the alphabetical collection, which is therefore also referred to as the Alphabetico-Anonymous Collection. Many sayings appear in both collections, but not all. Interestingly, the earliest witness to the sayings is a Latin translation from the sixth century attributed to the (sub-)deacons Pelagius and John. This version is known as the *Verba Seniorum*. Through the centuries the sayings were translated into many different languages, such as Coptic, Ethiopic, Syriac, Slavonic, Georgian, and Arabic.[7] Samuel Rubenson has carried out a fascinating research project at the University of Lund on the multitude of textual traditions.[8] The Greek collections appear under a variety of names, such as *Gerontikon* (derived from the Greek word *gerōn*, 'old man') or *Paterikon* (from *pater*, 'father'), while a Syriac version was known as *Paradise of the Fathers*.[9] The editor of the Systematic Collection, Jean-Claude Guy observed that the text is not uniform.[10] His critical edition therefore presents a construct based on a wide range of divergent manuscripts.[11] It was published posthumously and will be referred to in this article.[12] A critical edition of the Alphabetical Collection is in preparation.[13] Until it is published we will have to rely on the old nineteenth-century version printed in Migne and included in the database of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG).[14]

At this point it is important to note that all the issues discussed so far with regard to the transmission of the actual text are intrinsically connected to matters of context and questions of origin and reception.[15] The tradition of the

7 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 169–171; see also 206–211 (on Poemen as possible compiler of the sayings).

8 Early Monasticism and Classical Paideia: http://portal.research.lu.se/portal/en/projects/early-monasticism-and-classical-paideia(7439b4da-a030-4482-a7dd-5c08c4992977).html.

9 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 169.

10 See Jean-Claude Guy, *Recherches sur la tradition grecque des Apophthegmata Patrum*, Subsidia hagiographica 36 (Bruxelles 1962), 119.

11 Guy presents a comparative table of ten manuscript traditions in *Recherches*, 126–181.

12 The Systematic Collection has been published in three volumes of the Sources chrétiennes series: volumes 387, 474, and 498 (Paris 1993, 2003, and 2005). The material for all three volumes was prepared by Jean-Claude Guy and published posthumously with the help of Bernard Flusin (vol. I) and Bernard Meunier (vols. II and III).

13 It will be published by John Wortley.

14 PG 65. 71–440. Additional material is found in Guy, *Recherches*, 19–36, 236–238.

15 Cf. also Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 248–251.

Apophthegmata did not start with the written word, but with the spoken word. As has been seen, this wisdom literature of the desert began with words uttered in Coptic. These words were spoken by the so-called abbas of the desert, figures who were experienced in the monastic life and approached for advice by younger monks.[16] The primary social context for this exchange of spiritual advice was the ascetic community of Scetis, a settlement that was semi-anchoritic in nature, which meant that the ascetics lived predominantly in isolation, in caves or cells, with limited social contact.[17] In principle, monks would live on their own, but at the same time it seems that an individual brother could attach himself to an abba as his disciple.[18] Thus, at the heart of the monastic settlement of Scetis were small-scale groups of older monks and their apprentices.[19] The lifestyle of these men was marked by solitude, celibacy, fasting, manual labour, and prayer.[20] Over time, the settlement expanded, forming four distinct congregations.[21] On Saturdays and Sundays the monks would meet to share meals and celebrate the Eucharist. During such weekends they also gathered for evening prayer and the night office.[22]

The most intimate social connection, however, seems to have been that between abba and disciple, whether the disciple had formed a more permanent attachment to the abba in question or was more loosely related to one or more abbas on the basis of more or less regular visits. This bond and the interaction that flowed from it form the context for our sayings. A few aspects of this interaction must be noted here. First, the 'word' that the disciple asked for was highly personal in character: it was meant for him alone. Thus, we must always keep in mind that originally the sayings represented individual responses to individual problems. The fact that later generations would feel drawn to the wisdom of these words again and again, thus universalizing their content, must not obscure this personal perspective. Secondly, the abba's response was guided by discernment, that is, by special insight which, according to the sayings themselves, was the fruit of personal experience and prayer. And thirdly, the efficacy of the saying was linked directly to the willingness and the ability of the monk in question to digest it and act upon it, to *perform* it, so to speak.[23]

16 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 171–173, 177–178.
17 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 175.
18 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 178.
19 Harmless, Desert Christians, 177.
20 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 175–177; 232–236.
21 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 178–179.
22 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 179–180.
23 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 171–173. See also Claudia Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Com-

Let us pause for a moment to reflect on the notion of performance, which is closely related to some of the issues at hand, namely, the personal quality of the sayings and the notion of the necessity to act. I take my cue here from an article by Claudia Rapp entitled 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication'.[24] Rapp opens with a passage from late antiquity describing the transformative potential of reading Scripture,[25] and applies this well-known notion of *lectio divina* to hagiography, pointing out that both author and audience participate in the holiness of the narrated life through the complementary activities of writing and listening. She calls this process 'spiritual communication'.[26] The author unfolds the important, related notion of *diegesis*, 'story' or 'narration', which in the context of early Christianity generally refers to a compact narrative that has the power to improve one's life.[27] In early Egyptian monasticism such traditions of storytelling played a formative role.[28] As indicated in the introduction above, edifying stories about the fathers and mothers of the desert were eventually written down and collected, thus widening the scope of their audience. Or as William Harmless puts it: 'The textuality of the *Apophthegmata* created, in essence, a portable desert wisdom, making it possible for Egypt to be carried around the empire.'[29] So a major transition took place from modest oral beginnings to a more solid representation of desert wisdom in texts. Mirroring this transition, Rapp focuses not primarily on the transforming potential of the actual encounter between abba and disciple in the original more or less private setting, but on the powerful experience of writing about that encounter (from the perspective of the hagiographer) and of receiving it through eyes or ears (from the perspective of the audience).[30] What makes the related acts of writing and reading/listening so special in this case, is that a performative element is involved, as the author possesses first-hand experience of the lives he nar-

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munication in Early Greek Hagiography: The Use of *Diegesis*', *JECS* 6 (1998), 431–448, at 435.

24 For bibliographical details, see the previous footnote.

25 Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication', 431. The passage quoted is by Ennodius who depicts Epiphanius' reading of Scripture (Ennodius of Pavia, *Vita Epiphanii* 30–31; in Friedrich Vogel [ed.], MGH AA 7 [Berlin 1885] 88, 3–11). Epiphanius was bishop of Pavia from 467 until 497.

26 Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication', 432.

27 Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication', 433.

28 Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication', 434–435.

29 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 251. To be clear: in early Christianity both men and women demonstrated an interest in ascetic practice and ideals; in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (*AP*) we come across sayings by desert fathers *and* mothers. The *AP* does not, however, contain female ascetics or 'sisters' as the counterpart to brothers asking questions.

30 Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication', 436–439.

rates.[31] Ideally, the imitation of the saints that has first been performed by the narrator will be replicated in the audience when they digest the story.[32] Rapp explains:

> The act of giving a *diegesis* in writing can thus become a sort of spiritual participation in the occurrences that are being described. Far from being a mere conveyor of the message, the hagiographical account in the form of a *diegesis* is thus the message itself.[33]

Basically, the hagiographer tries to incorporate his readers into the story,[34] turning the recipients of the text into actual participants through a process of re-enactment and performance. As was suggested above, this mirrors a biblical dynamic, for in scriptural terms *diegesis* generally denotes the reliable witness of someone who states what God has done in their life and who evokes in the addressees the ability to share in the situation.[35] Interestingly, specific literary qualities that supported such participation were also advertised in late ancient books on rhetoric, as rhetoricians in training were instructed that their *diegeseis* should be clear, brief, and plausible.[36] Thus informed by both biblical and classical literature, *diegesis* acquired an important role in hagiography, which often mediated the oral traditions of the desert. This amalgam of influences, then, mirrored a specific practice of spiritual direction,[37] and to one particular brand of such monastic communication we now turn.

2 'Father, Give Me a Word': Sentence as Symbol

Desert spirituality has often been characterized by the catchphrase 'Father, give me a word'. Rapp cites these words in her article,[38] and in his *Desert Christians*, Harmless—who devotes no fewer than three chapters to the *Apophthegmata*

31 Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication', 440.
32 Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication', 441.
33 Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication', 441.
34 Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication', 444.
35 Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication', 446.
36 Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication', 441–448, esp. at 442 and 446 ('clarity, brevity, and plausibility'). Connections between this type of literature and rhetoric will be discussed below in the section on the context of Greek philosophy and rhetoric.
37 Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication', 448.
38 Rapp, 'Storytelling as Spiritual Communication', 435.

Patrum—includes a section entitled 'Abba, Give Me a Word', to which I have already extensively referred.[39] John Wortley, who is working on a critical edition of the Alphabetical Collection of the *Apophthegmata*, has published a translation of this work under the title *Give Me a Word*, once more attesting to the popularity of the phrase. Before exploring the form in which, and frequency with which the sentence actually appears in the two basic collections of the sayings, I will call upon one last witness, Douglas Burton-Christie, who has published an important work on the sayings of the desert entitled *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism*.[40] He writes:

> It is difficult to escape the feeling, when reading *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers*, that one is listening in on a conversation. The request for a 'word' on the part of a monk, the sometimes gentle, sometimes sharp, often ironic responses from the elder, the subsequent questions or complaints from the monks—these 'conversations' comprise the basic stuff of the *Sayings*.[41]

According to Burton-Christie, the monks of the desert provided a form of spiritual education which was based on personal experience feeding into a dialogue between the abba and a disciple.[42] He then states: 'A common expression is: "Abba, speak a word [*rēma*] to me."'[43] The abundance of references to this iconic sentence, '(Abba/Father,) Give me a word', has resulted in the research presented below. I will pay attention to both the frequency of the various word combinations involved and the content of the stories.

A first step in the inquiry was to enter the phrase '*abba, eipe moi logon*' into the database of the TLG.[44] The results were surprising: this sentence occurs exactly twice in the *Apophthegmata* (comprising some 2,500 sayings in total), and in a sense the two hits should even count as a single instance, because the two occurrences represent one and the same saying as transmitted in the Alpha-

39 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 171–173.

40 See footnote 5.

41 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 76.

42 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 77. Regarding the notion of spiritual pedagogy, the author cites from an article by Jean-Claude Guy, 'Les *Apophthegmata Patrum*', in G. Lemaître, *Théologie de la vie monastique* (Paris 1961), 75.

43 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 77.

44 This research was carried out in September 2016.

betical and in the Systematic Collection. This is how the story of that saying goes; I include both versions from the two collections in English and in Greek in order to demonstrate the characteristic presence of similarities and dissimilarities:[45]

> In his early days Abba Euprepius visited some elder and said to him: 'Abba, tell me a saying [showing] how I am to be saved,' but he said to him: 'If you wish to be saved, when you visit somebody, do not begin speaking until he questions you.' Pricked in his conscience by the saying, he prostrated himself saying: 'I have indeed read many books, but never knew such teaching'. He went out having reaped great benefit.[46]

> Παρέβαλεν ἐν ἀρχῇ αὐτοῦ ὁ ἀββᾶς Εὐπρέπιός τινι γέροντι, καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· Ἀββᾶ, εἰπέ μοι λόγον πῶς σωθῶ. Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Ἐὰν θέλῃς σωθῆναι, ὅταν παραβάλῃς τινὶ, μὴ προλάβῃς λαλῆσαι πρὶν ἐξετάσει σε. Ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ κατανυγεὶς ἔβαλε μετάνοιαν, λέγων· Ὄντως πολλὰ βιβλία ἀνέγνων, καὶ τοιαύτην παιδείαν οὐδέπω ἔγνων. Καὶ πολλὰ ὠφεληθεὶς ἐξῆλθεν.
>
> Euprepius 7

> A brother visited some elder and said to him, 'Abba, utter a saying for me [showing] how I might be saved,' but he said to him, 'If you wish to be saved, when you visit somebody, do not begin speaking until he questions you.' Pricked in his conscience by the saying, he prostrated himself saying, 'I have indeed read many books but never knew such teaching.' He went his way improved.[47]

> Παρέβαλεν ἀδελφὸς πρός τινα γέροντα καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· Ἀββᾶ, εἰπέ μοι λόγον πῶς σωθῶ. Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Ἐὰν θέλῃς σωθῆναι, ὅταν παραβάλῃς τινὶ μὴ προλάβῃς λαλῆσαί τι πρὶν ἐξετάσει σε. Ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ λόγῳ κατανυγεὶς ἔβαλεν αὐτῷ μετάνοιαν λέγων· Ὄντως πολλὰ βιβλία ἀνέγνων, τοιαύτην δὲ παιδείαν οὐδέποτε ἔγνων. Καὶ ὠφεληθεὶς ἀπῆλθεν.
>
> Syst. Coll. 10.24

45 The English translations are by John Wortley: *Give Me a Word: The Alphabetical Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Yonkers, NY 2014) and *The Book of the Elders, Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Systematic Collection* (Collegeville, MN 2012).

46 Wortley, *Give me a Word*, 102. The expression βάλλω μετάνοιαν is rendered here as 'to prostrate oneself'; cf. Gerhard W. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961/1987), 283, 858.

47 Wortley, *The Book of the Elders*, 148–149.

Before moving on to other instances of the ritualized sentence under discussion, I will offer a few observations concerning this particular saying. The first aspect to be mentioned, which is also footnoted in Wortley's translation of Euprepius' seventh apophthegm, is that the words are attributed to Evagrius in many manuscripts. This attests to the complicated textual tradition mentioned above. Secondly, it is noteworthy that while Wortley published his translation of the Alphabetical Collection under the telling title *Give Me a Word*, his actual rendering of the Greek behind these words is different in this case: not 'give me a word', but 'tell me a saying'. Another, earlier, and well-known translation by Benedicta Ward, however, does translate the Greek *eipe moi logon* here as 'give me a word'.[48] Thirdly, we must note the words that follow the introductory phrase, *pōs sōthō*, which Wortley has translated as '[showing] how I am to be saved' and Ward as 'so that I may be saved'.[49] Further on, I will address the use of this verb and the central notion of salvation in greater detail. Fourthly, there are two instances of wordplay in this passage: the first occurs by the juxtaposition of *parabalēs* and *prolabēs*, while the second consists in the repetition of the root *bal-* in the verb *ebalen* (cf. *parabalēs*). A fifth important element that must be noted is the brother's reaction to the 'word' that is given. The Greek has *katanugeis*, which Wortley translates as 'pricked in his conscience'. However, I prefer Ward's translation: she renders it as 'filled with compunction'.[50] The verb in question is *katanussō* and it refers to the tearful realization of one's sinfulness. One of the books of the Systematic Collection, book III, is devoted to this theme and bears the title *Peri katanuxeōs*, which Guy translates as *De la componction* and Wortley as *Sorrow for Sin*.[51] The notion of *katanuxis* is closely related to another concept, *penthos*, which has similar connotations. In his study of the sayings, Burton-Christie devotes a whole chapter to this notion and to related themes: 'Eschatology, *Penthos*, and the Struggle against Evil'.[52] For now it suffices to note the important aspect of a remorseful response that is so often present in the sayings. One final observation concerns the polemical reference to education: while the monk in question has read many books (which suggests he was well-educated), he states that he had never received such good teaching. The word used here, *paideia*, is the technical term for clas-

48 Benedicta Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Alphabetical Collection* (Kalamazoo, MI 1984, revised edition), 62.

49 See previous footnote.

50 See footnote 48. Cf. also footnote 47.

51 Guy's translation can be found in his critical edition of the *Apophthegmata*: *Les Apophtegmes des Pères*, vol. 1, 149 (SC 387). Cf. Wortley, *The Book of the Elders*, 25.

52 Burton-Christie, *Word in the Desert*, 181–212 (chapter 6).

sical education; in this case, however, it acquires a very different sense as it is applied to a form of monastic wisdom that is presented as precisely subverting the general educational system.

Having explored the single saying that includes the words '*abba, eipe moi logon*', let us now turn to the alternative wording of '*abba, eipe moi rēma*'. This word combination occurs twice in two different sayings (i.e. this time it is not a question of two versions of the same saying). The first is found in the Alphabetical Collection and is attributed to Macarius the Egyptian (or the Great). Interestingly, it is the saying that Harmless selects to start his discussion of the sayings in his *Desert Christians*.[53] The story goes as follows:

> A brother visited Abba Macarius the Egyptian and said to him: 'Abba, tell me a saying [indicating] how I can be saved.' The elder said: 'Go to the tomb and insult the dead,' so the brother went. He insulted and stoned [them] then he came and told the elder. 'And they said nothing to you?' he said to him. 'No,' said [the brother]. The elder said to him: 'Go again tomorrow and praise them.' The brother went and praised them, saying: 'Apostles, holy and righteous ones,' then he came to the elder and told him: 'I praised [them].' 'And they made no response?' he said to him. 'No,' said the brother, and the elder said to him: 'You know how much you insulted them and they gave no answer; and how much you praised them but they said nothing to you. So too must you become dead if you want to be saved. Pay no attention (like the dead) either to the injustice of folk or to their praise—then you can be saved.'[54]
>
> Ἀδελφὸς παρέβαλε τῷ ἀββᾷ Μακαρίῳ τῷ Αἰγυπτίῳ, καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· Ἀββᾶ, εἰπέ μοι ῥῆμα πῶς σωθῶ. Καὶ λέγει ὁ γέρων· Ὕπαγε εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον, καὶ ὕβρισον τοὺς νεκρούς. Ἀπελθὼν οὖν ὁ ἀδελφὸς, ὕβρισε καὶ ἐλίθασε· καὶ ἐλθὼν ἀπήγγειλε τῷ γέροντι. Καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· Οὐδέν σοι ἐλάλησαν; Ὁ δὲ ἔφη· Οὐχί. Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ γέρων· Ὕπαγε πάλιν αὔριον, καὶ δόξασον αὐτούς. Ἀπελθὼν οὖν ὁ ἀδελφὸς, ἐδόξασεν αὐτοὺς, λέγων· Ἀπόστολοι, ἅγιοι, καὶ δίκαιοι. Καὶ ἦλθε πρὸς τὸν γέροντα, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Ἐδόξασα. Καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· Οὐδέν σοι ἀπεκρίθησαν; Ἔφη ὁ ἀδελφός· Οὐχί. Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ γέρων· Οἶδας πόσα ἠτίμασας αὐτοὺς, καὶ οὐδέν σοι ἀπεκρίθησαν, καὶ πόσα ἐδόξασας αὐτοὺς, καὶ οὐδέν σοι ἐλάλησαν· οὕτως καὶ

53 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 171. Harmless cites the translation by Ward. I have quoted Wortley here.

54 Wortley, *Give me a Word*, 186.

> σὺ, ἐὰν θέλῃς σωθῆναι, γενοῦ νεκρός· μήτε τὴν ἀδικίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, μήτε τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν λογίσῃ, ὡς οἱ νεκροί· καὶ δύνασαι σωθῆναι.
>
> Macarius 23

What we see here is a storyline and words of wisdom combined. A more compact version of this saying is included in the Systematic Collection: 10.47 gives the advice but not the colourful anecdote and lively dialogue.

The second instance of '*abba, eipe moi rēma*' is part of the Systematic Collection and appears in book 3, the book on *katanuxis*, that is, compunction or 'sorrow for sin'. It reads:

> A brother asked an elder: 'Abba, utter a saying for me.' Said the elder to him: 'When God struck Egypt, there was not a house without sorrow' [see Exod 12:30].[55]
>
> Ἀδελφὸς ἠρώτησέ τινα γέροντα λέγων· Ἀββᾶ, εἰπέ μοι ῥῆμα. Λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ γέρων· Ὅτε ὁ Θεὸς ἐπάταξεν Αἴγυπτον, οὐκ ἦν οἶκος μὴ ἔχων πένθος.
>
> Syst. Coll. 3.43

This is actually quite a complicated and layered saying. The first thing to note is that it occurs in the book about the notion of *katanuxis*, which appears as its synonym *penthos* in this instance. We have encountered this term before in the context of *compunctio* and weeping: sorrow for sin. A second important observation to be made is that the word *penthos* is in fact embedded in an allusion to Scripture. The biblical phrase conjures up the story from the book of Exodus where God strikes Egypt, forcing Pharaoh to let his people go. His final punishment is the death of the eldest son in every house in Egypt: there was weeping everywhere. For those who are familiar with this tale, however, the saying immediately raises a question: what precisely is the connection between the brother's request and the abba's response, because the contexts of the monk and the biblical text seem to diverge considerably. In other words, when the brother asks for a saying and the abba replies by offering this word from Scripture, this presents a kind of riddle. In his study on Scripture in the *Apophthegmata*, a much more philological work than Burton-Christie's, Per Rönnegård discusses this particular puzzle.[56] He notes that in Scripture, the

55 Wortley, *The Book of the Elders*, 35.

56 Per Rönnegård, *Threads and Images: The Use of Scripture in Apophthegmata Patrum* (Winona Lake, IN 2010), 54–58. In this study, the author demonstrates how deeply Scripture is embedded in the wisdom traditions transmitted in the sayings.

actual text does not read *penthos*, but 'a dead person': 'there was not a house in which there was not a dead person' (τεθνηκώς). Commenting on the adaptation of the scriptural verse in the *Apophthegmata*, Rönnegård refers to a saying by abba Moses from the Alphabetical Collection (Moses 18), where the 'dead person' in this passage from Exodus is explicitly explained in terms of 'one's own sins'. In this case from the Systematic Collection (3.43), the monastic notion of *penthos* is cleverly substituted for the dead children of Egypt, mirroring the mourning undoubtedly caused by their death. In spite of divergent contexts, the sorrow about one's eldest child who has died, and the sadness caused by sins that lead to spiritual death, are connected by a Bible verse which functions as a riddle that sheds light on the human condition. Thus, Scripture appears here as a kind of oracle: the holy man speaks a word from the Bible about divine action, suggesting that it is relevant to the brother in question.[57] It is interesting to note that while Harmless refers to the sayings in general as possessing 'an almost oracular quality', this apophthegm highlights a concrete instance of that oracular quality as the word of God becomes an oracle on the abba's lips.

The next step of my investigation was to leave out 'abba' to see if this would yield more results.[58] Indeed it did: the combination *eipe moi logon* occurs six times. Two of these instances have already been addressed: they are the two instances from the Alphabetical and the Systematic Collection discussed above, both of which include the word 'abba'. The remaining four sayings that read *eipe moi logon* appear in the Alphabetical Collection, in sayings attributed to Hierax, Macarius the Great/the Egyptian, Serapion, and Sisoes. For reasons of space, I will not discuss these here.

The alternative *eipe moi rēma* yields higher numbers: 17 to be precise. It is attested 14 times in the Alphabetico-Anonymous Collection (13 are related to names, one is transmitted anonymously) and three times in the Systematic Collection (in 3.4, 10.169, and 13.7). In the Alphabetical Collection two sayings are attributed to Macarius the Great or the Egyptian, the famous founder of Scetis, and—interestingly—both refer to weeping. The first reads:

57 Cf. Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 174: 'the common formula "give me a word" in fact amounts to "give me a sentence of wisdom", which comes in the form of a paraphrased biblical text.' The author refers here to the specific case of Syst.Coll. 3.43.

58 Note that Wortley does not include 'abba' in the title of his translation of the Alphabetical Collection, which is simply: *Give Me a Word* (see footnote 45).

> Abba Poemen besought him with many tears: 'Tell me a saying [indicating] how I can be saved.' In reply the elder said to him: 'The thing you are inquiring about has now departed from the monks.'[59]
>
> Macarius 25

To compare, I also include Ward's translation:

> Abba Poemen asked him weeping, 'Give me a word that I may be saved.' But the old man replied, 'What you are looking for has disappeared now from among the monks.'[60]

The Greek reads:

> Παρεκάλεσεν ὁ ἀββᾶς Ποιμὴν αὐτὸν μετὰ πολλῶν δακρύων, λέγων· Εἰπέ μοι ῥῆμα πῶς σωθῶ. Ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ γέρων εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Τὸ πρᾶγμα ὃ ζητεῖς, ἀπῆλθε νῦν ἀπὸ τῶν μοναχῶν.

Wortley and Ward have rendered 'μετὰ πολλῶν δακρύων' differently, as 'with many tears' and 'weeping' respectively, but in both cases the theme is, once more, the pervasive notion of sorrow. The sorrowful atmosphere that we encountered in the previous saying, which consisted in an oracular quotation from the book of Exodus, is also present in this case. There seems to be a reference to the end of Scetis and the text is reminiscent of a saying by abba Arsenius which reads: 'But when Scete was devastated, he came out weeping and saying: "The world has lost Rome, the monks [have lost] Scete."'[61]

The second saying attributed to abba Macarius, which includes the specific word combination *eipe moi rēma*, reads as follows:

> Abba Isaiah asked Abba Macarius: 'Tell me a saying,' and the elder said to him: 'Flee from folk.' Abba Isaiah said to him: 'What is it to "flee from folk?"' Said the elder to him: 'It is to remain in your cell and to weep for your sins.'[62]
>
> Macarius 27

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59 Wortley, *Give Me a Word*, 186.

60 Ward, *The Sayings*, 133.

61 Syst. Coll. 2.9 (translation Wortley, *The Book of the Elders*, 16). The equivalent can be found in the Alphabetical Collection, Arsenius 21.

62 Wortley, *Give Me a Word*, 187. As the saying demonstrates, abbas sometimes take on the role of the student or disciple who asks questions; this illustrates that abbas would not only function as 'oracles of wisdom', but fundamentally remained learners all their lives.

Thus, both sayings contain the notion of crying, of shedding tears. In monastic literature this motif is known as the 'gift of tears':[63] Poemen cries, Isaiah must cry. I will return to this topic when discussing the Irish penitentials below, in the section on Christian pastoral care in the early medieval period.

It is interesting to note that an alternative version of the 'word' given in Macarius 27 is included in another, more elaborate saying that is transmitted both anonymously (in the Alphabetico-Anonymous collection) and in the Systematic Collection. In this particular instance we find the rare connection of *eipe moi rēma* with *pater*: this specific word combination occurs in the anonymous saying N 132 D and in the Systematic Collection (20.13).[64] It is preceded by an anecdote, which I will not quote here, while the 'word' itself reads:

> 'Father, utter a saying for me. How can I be saved?' He said to him, 'Flee from folk and keep silence, and you shall be saved.'[65]
>
> Πάτερ, εἰπέ μοι ῥῆμα πῶς σωθῶ. Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Φεῦγε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ σιώπα καὶ σωζῇ.

We have one other unique instance related to *eipe moi rēma*, a case of inversion, which reads '*eipe, abba, pōs hina sōthō*' (Εἰπέ, ἀββᾶ, πῶς ἵνα σωθῶ): 'Tell me, *abba*, how I can be saved'. This phrase is found in Systematic Collection 6.20. Wortley translates: 'Say, Abba, how am I to be saved?'[66]

The three remaining occurrences of *eipe moi rēma* (without the addition of *abba* or *pater*) in the Systematic Collection are: 3.4 (also found in the Alphabetical Collection as Ammonas 1), 10.169 (compare the anonymous saying N 387), and 13.7 (with a parallel in Poemen 69). In this paragraph, I will briefly comment on the first two. The former, 3.4, reads:

> A brother asked Abba Ammonas: 'Utter a saying for me.' The elder said: 'Go and frame your mind the way the evildoers who are in prison do, for they are asking people, "Where is the governor and when is he coming?", and weeping in expectation. This is how the monk should pay heed all the

63 Burton-Christie addresses the 'gift of tears' in his study on the *Apophthegmata*; see *The Word in the Desert*, 185–192 and 207.

64 Most of the anonymous sayings, which were not included in the first edition by Cotelier, were found in the manuscript Coislin126 and published by F. Nau (the letter N refers to these sayings) between 1908 and 1913 in *Revue de l'orient chrétien*; see Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 85; cf. also Guy, *Recherches* (see footnote 10), 63–74, 89–91, and 95–97.

65 Wortley, *The Book of the Elders*, 365.

66 Wortley, *The Book of the Elders*, 94.

> time and be reproaching his soul, saying "O me! How can I stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and how can I speak in my defense?" If you deliberate like this all the time, you can be saved.'[67]

Four related aspects must be noted in connection with this saying. First, it occurs in book 3 of the Systematic Collection, which, as we have seen, deals with *katanuxis*, or 'compunction'. Secondly, it comes as no surprise that 'weeping' is once more included; I will address this in greater detail later. Thirdly, this 'weeping' is set in the context of the Final Judgment, a connection that was suggested earlier when I cited the title of a chapter in Burton-Christie's book: 'Eschatology, *Penthos*, and the Struggle against Evil'. And fourthly, this saying ends with the crucial category of salvation (cf. the phrase 'you can be saved'), to which I will return shortly. The latter, that is, the second saying from the Systematic Collection which has *eipe moi rēma*, 10.169, also includes the important element of salvation:

> A brother asked an elder, 'Utter a saying for me so I can be saved.' He said: 'Let us make a diligent effort to work a little at a time; [then] God comes along with us and we are saved.'[68]

Having discussed the various sentence constructions that lie behind the phrase 'Father, give me a word', I now come to the conspicuous connection between this catchphrase and the theme of salvation. In what form does this connection appear? Let us first consider a specific word combination that we have seen before: *pōs sōthō*, that is, 'how can I be saved?' In the Alphabetical Collection this phrase occurs 15 times, while we have two instances of the plural *pōs sōthōmen* ('how can *we* be saved?'): nine times in the Alphabetico-Anonymous Collection (with six sayings attributed to named abbas and three anonymous ones) and six times in the Systematic Collection. Next, it is striking to note that in nine out of those 15 instances of *pōs sōthō*, the phrase occurs in combination with an instance of the introductory sentence studied in this article: (*abba/pater,*) *eipe moi rēma/logon*. Even more significant is the fact that in those very few cases in which *abba* (three times) or *pater* (twice) is included in this phrase (see above), the sentence continues with the words *pōs sōthō*. An alternative word combination also exists, which reads *hina sōthō*: 'that I might be saved' (these two words occur four times in combination, but only

67 Wortley, *The Book of the Elders*, 26.
68 Wortley, *The Book of the Elders*, 183.

once in connection with *eipe moi rēma*; once, *hina* is combined with the plural *sōthōmen*). Another unique case has the syntactically strange combination of *hina* and *pōs*, and interestingly enough this happens in the one instance of inversion mentioned above: '*eipe moi, abba, pōs hina sōthō*' (Syst. Coll. 6.20). These are remarkable results, as it means that there is an intrinsic connection in the *Apophthegmata* between the act of asking for a word of wisdom and the desire for salvation.

John Wortley, whose translations I have cited regularly above, has written an important article on the topic of salvation, entitled 'What the Desert Fathers meant by "being saved"'.[69] Wortley concludes that salvation is in fact a prominent theme in the *Apophthegmata*.[70] This is perhaps not surprising since 'salvation' is a central category in the Christian religion in general. In 1Tim 1:15, for instance, we read: 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' However, in the sayings the monks rarely speak directly about 'eternal salvation'. The focus is different and 'saving one's soul' carries the practical connotation of 'living the ascetic life'; in fact, these expressions are synonymous.[71] In this respect it is important to distinguish between an immediate goal (*skopos*) and an ultimate destination (*telos*).[72] The latter is 'to enter the Kingdom of Heaven', the former 'to be a successful monk'.[73] We encounter this immediate sense of salvation in both the Old and the New Testament. In the Old Testament, for instance, salvation often pertains to being set free from one's enemies, while in the New Testament it may refer to healing in a multi-layered sense: physical, spiritual, social.[74] Both connotations feed into the literature of desert monasticism which is illustrated by an anecdote about abba Antony who, troubled by *accidie*, asks God: 'How can I be saved (*pōs sōthō*)?': in this case, the demon of *accidie* figures as an enemy from whom one must be set free *and* healed.[75]

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69 See footnote 5.

70 Wortley, 'What the Desert Fathers meant by "being saved"', 288: 'whether explicit or implied, the question of salvation arises with astonishing frequency in the *Apophthegmata*: certainly well in excess of one hundred times'.

71 Wortley, 'What the Desert Fathers meant by "being saved"', 290.

72 Wortley refers to John Cassian here, who makes this distinction in his first *Collatio*; see Wortley, 'What the Desert Fathers meant by "being saved"', 291–292.

73 Wortley, 'What the Desert Fathers meant by "being saved"', 292.

74 Wortley, 'What the Desert Fathers meant by "being saved"', 293.

75 Wortley, 'What the Desert Fathers meant by "being saved"', 292–294. The reference is to the first saying attributed to Abba Antony in the Alphabetical Collection. In the Systematic Collection it is included as the first saying in book 7. Wortley notes that in this rare instance, the question (How am I to be saved?) is posed to God.

If the immediate goal, then, is to be successful as a monk, how is this attained? While the *Apophthegmata* offer a multitude of approaches to this issue, one element seems to be fundamental, namely the virtue of humility, which exemplifies the cornerstone of desert spirituality.[76] Once the monk has ventured out into the ascetic life, he has to persevere in the face of many temptations. Once he has succeeded in managing this, the reward is immediate and takes the form of inward peace (*anapausis*).[77] At the end of his article, Wortley includes an imaginary dialogue, which opens with a question posed by the apostle Peter: 'Look, we have forsaken everything and followed you; what is there in it for us?' The answer might well have been:

> If you walk humbly with each other, here in this mortal life you shall have ἀνάπαυσις. Not merely the ἀταραξία of the philosophers nor that sterile ἀπάθεια which will eventually assert itself as the acme of monastic perfection, but a 'profound serenity and peace within'.[78]

On that note, we must now turn to the world of Greek philosophy and rhetoric.

3 The Context of Classical *Paideia*: Rhetorical and Philosophical Traditions

In the article on salvation discussed above, Wortley writes:

> Most of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* are in the form of question and answer, a clear indication of their didactic purpose: a junior ('brother') approaches a 'senior' (elder, [γέρων] or father, *abba*) and asks him a question.[79]

76 Wortley, 'What the Desert Fathers meant by "being saved"', 294–300 (words cited are on 296).

77 Wortley, 'What the Desert Fathers meant by "being saved"', 300–304 (words quoted are on 300 and 301). Cf. Nienke Vos, 'Seeing Hesychia: Appeals to the Imagination in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*', *SP* 64 (2013), 33–45 as well as Nienke Vos, 'The Desert Sayings (*Apophthegmata Patrum*) as Mystagogical Path: Images of *Hesychia* in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*', in Paul van Geest (ed.), *Seeing through the Eyes of Faith: New Approaches to the Mystagogy of the Church Fathers* (Leuven 2015), 511–532.

78 Wortley, 'What the Desert Fathers meant by "being saved"', 306.

79 Wortley, 'What the Desert Fathers meant by "being saved"', 287. For more on question and answer literature, the so-called *erotapokriseis*, see Annelie Volgers (ed.), *Erotapokriseis: Early Christian Question-and-Answer Literature in Context*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 37 (Leuven 2004).

This didactic dimension has also been asserted by Rönnegård.[80] In the second chapter of his study, 'Text and Context', he points to the context of rhetorical education, citing from a well-known ancient handbook, Theon's *Progymnasmata*, which defines the *apophthegma* or *chreia* as 'a concise statement or action which is attributed with aptness to some specified character or to someone analogous to a character.'[81] The basic meaning of *chreia* is 'something useful':[82] the recipient will benefit from the wisdom encapsulated in the saying. Probing deeper into the notion of *chreia* and its more elaborate twin *ergasia*,[83] Rönnegård builds on the work of Lilian Larsen who has compared the *Apophthegmata Patrum* to:

> gnomic compilations that were used in Greek and Roman antiquity for the purpose of practicing grammar and rhetoric, where the overarching aim was to encourage an imitation of the exemplars depicted there, and to allow the student to incorporate those sayings and stories in their own everyday speech and writing.[84]

Larsen has argued that the *Apophthegmata Patrum* must be identified as such compilations: belonging to the same genre and used for similar purposes. Rönnegård has subsequently evaluated this position, distinguishing between (1) the structure and content of the sayings, (2) their purpose, and (3) their sociolinguistic setting.[85] He agrees that the majority of the sayings can be classified as *chreiai*,[86] and that they are meant to 'inspire, to instruct, and to be imitated.'[87] Thus, both the Greco-Roman educational traditions in general and those of early Christian monasticism in particular present ideals that help readers to

80 See footnote 56.

81 Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 8 (the quotation is from Theon, *Progymnasmata* 96.19–23). The question of genre, and especially the notion of *chreia*, is discussed on 7–11.

82 Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 10.

83 Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 172. In a number of cases, Scripture is included in the *chreiai*, and such *chreiai* could be expanded upon in *ergasiai*. Cf. Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 182, where he refers to the work of Kathleen McVey (on the occurrence of Scripture in *chreiai*). See also footnote 90.

84 Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 8.

85 Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 8.

86 Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 9. One type of *chreia* discussed by Rönnegård occurs in the form of question and answer (174). Cf. also the interesting discussion of connections between *chreia* and the desert sayings by Claudia Rapp, 'The origins of hagiography and the literature of early monasticism: purpose and genre between tradition and innovation', 119–130 (see footnote 5).

87 Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 9.

become responsible members of a society.[88] Still, the third point, relating to the sociolinguistic setting, is more complex. As such, *chreiai* were popular in philosophical schools, where they were used to characterize founders. Again, this resonates with the monastic tradition which was often viewed as *philosophia* and which preserved reminiscences of the abbas as *chreiai*, succinct sayings of wisdom. Rönnegård does not, however, explicitly endorse Larsen's claim that the *Apophthegmata* functioned as part of the curriculum in the monasteries.[89]

Admittedly, he does not go so far as to say that the sayings were produced in classes on rhetoric. Still, there can be no doubt that existing rhetorical exercises were formative.[90] Ultimately, we must be aware that close connections existed between the educational programme of classical *paideia* and the sayings of the desert.[91]

Apart from connections to the world of rhetorical education, there is also a strong link with philosophy. As we have seen, *chreai* also functioned in a philosophical context as they were used to characterize the revered founders of philosophical traditions by calling to mind their words of wisdom. Burton-Christie addresses the background to such parallels in his study on Scripture and the quest for holiness in early Christian monasticism.[92] It is precisely the notion of a quest for holiness that provides a link between the wisdom of the desert and philosophical traditions.[93] The point is that religious concerns gained cultural momentum in late antiquity.[94] This was already observed by Peter Brown who noted that an important shift happened with respect to the perceived location of holiness: increasingly, the focus was on holy *persons*.[95] A case in point is provided by the Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus, who came

88 Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 11.

89 Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 11. Cf. Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 173: '[e]ven if the monastic *apophthegmata* are not the product of students practicing such exercises, they may still be strongly influenced by them'.

90 Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 176–177. For a more elaborate discussion on the technique of *ergasia* and the elements involved, such as comparison, exemplar, and authority of the elders, see 177–181.

91 Rönnegård, *Threads and Images*, 182.

92 This is the subtitle of the book. See footnote 5.

93 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 33–75 ('Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Late Antiquity'), esp. 48–54 (this section focuses on the Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus).

94 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 48.

95 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 48, with a reference to Peter Brown (*A Social Context to the Religious Crisis of the Third Century A.D.*, Colloquy 14, Center for Hermeneutical Studies, Berkeley 1975, 2–3).

to be seen by his followers as such a holy individual. Thus, Plotinus is presented as an exponent of religious trends in late antiquity, and—more precisely—in Greek philosophy: 'By the second century C.E. the philosophical schools were not thought of merely as intellectual schools of *thought* but as something broader—*bioi* or ways of life.'[96] In the same vein, E.R. Dodds argued that philosophy was increasingly interpreted as a quest for God,[97] while Pierre Hadot concluded that it became an instrument for a process of spiritual formation which focused on lifestyle and personal transformation.[98] Burton-Christie, in turn, concludes:

> These descriptions of philosophical endeavor in late antiquity catch much of the spirit of Plotinus's own school. It was characterized by a particular way of life and a distinctly religious approach to philosophical questions.[99]

According to Arthur D. Nock, conversion to philosophy implied a turning away from luxury, self-indulgence, and superstition towards a life of discipline and even contemplation.[100] In terms of outlook and lifestyle, there were both similarities and dissimilarities between the quests of pagan and Christian holy men. The practice of asceticism, for instance, occurred in both settings and was marked by a strict diet (vegetarianism), a sense of shame regarding the body (no bathing in public), frugality, little sleep, celibacy, and a rejection of luxury.[101] The two movements diverge, however, when it comes to their appreciation of culture and the ideal of poverty: the former is valued by philosophical schools but critiqued by desert Christians, while the latter is emphasized by Christian ascetics and generally rejected by cultured Greeks and Romans.[102]

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96 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 49; with a reference to Robert Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven, CT 1984), 72–77: '(Lucian calls them *bioi*) similar to what we today would call religious movements.'

97 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 49; the reference is to E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (New York 1970), 92–93.

98 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 49; the reference is to Pierre Hadot, *Exercices spirituels et philosophie antique* (Paris 1981), 63, 68.

99 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 49.

100 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 49; the reference is to A.D. Nock, *Conversion* (London, 1933), 179.

101 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 51.

102 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 49; with a reference to Peter Brown (*The Philosopher and Society in late Antiquity*, Colloquy 34, Center for Hermeneutical Studies, Berkeley 1978, 13–14). Cf. also Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 50–61.

Still, in both traditions, asceticism was valued as a practice that contributed to the cultivation of virtue.[103] In the Platonic tradition, this—in turn—was seen as a preparation for the correct interpretation of authoritative texts, which was considered crucial for spiritual growth. In the context of Plotinus, this meant that a fruitful reading of foundational texts depended on the philosopher's own religious experience and on his capacities as a spiritual guide.[104] We encounter a major link here between the two traditions with regard to the learning process. First, there is a connection in terms of what the process aims for: a journey towards self-knowledge,[105] resulting in fusion with 'the One'.[106] Secondly, and more importantly, there is a specific mode of communication which resonates with what we have seen in the *Apophthegmata*, namely, 'a *personal* and *dialogical* approach' to the interpretation of texts.[107] It is important to note that:

> The way of inner dialectic was, by its very nature, an experimental task, a process of discernment which required a *guide*. (…) Plotinus appears as a *spiritual master* who acted as a mediator of the philosophical tradition to his disciples.[108]

Thus a crucial aspect of the educational process is the close connection between master and student. Both are engaged in conversation, in dialogue, and a specific lifestyle is consequently acquired.[109] In the end, a number of fundamental elements coincide: the deep conversations with disciples based on an 'existential' interpretation of ancient philosophical texts with a view to self-discovery and a kind of *unio mystica*.[110] Philip Rousseau has emphasized precisely these aspects:[111]

> The central expression of authority within ascetic society was the relationship between masters and disciples. The ascetic was seen above all

103 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 51.
104 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 51.
105 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 52; with a reference to Dodds, *Pagan and Christian*, 84.
106 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 52.
107 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 52 (my italics).
108 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 52 (my italics).
109 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 53; cf. Hadot, *Exercices spirituels*, 48.
110 Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert*, 54.
111 Philip Rousseau, 'Ascetics as mediators and teachers', in J. Howard-Johnston and P.A. Hayward (eds), *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages: Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown* (Oxford 1999), 45–59.

> as a teacher—that was his (or occasionally her) function.[112] (…) [T]he enduring milieu within which and out of which new (Christian and masculine) relations were allowed to develop (…) was the *schola*, the world of the *paidagogos*—the other instrument of social formation in the Roman world (distinguished, that is, from the *domus*, the household, the realm of the mother).[113]

Rousseau here refers to Brown's claim that a shift took place in early Christianity from the didactic to the initiatory, which led to a focus on ritualization and the symbolic dimensions of the sacraments.[114] However, he opts for a different position, asserting that:

> [S]ober moralists like Clement of Alexandria and Lactantius had long set in place another agenda, espousing a lifelong *disciplina* that would remain alive and well in ascetic circles from the time of Evagrius and Cassian onwards. It may not have been a simple, stark alternative to the culture of initiation; but it maintained the educative values of an older society. (…) We are talking about a new *kind* of teacher and a new *kind* of *paideia*.[115]

This new kind of *paideia* is characterized by a number of aspects. First, it is highly dependent on Scripture. This ties in with, for instance, the research done by Rönnegård. Second, the teaching was both *inspired* and *inherited*, meaning that two distinct elements worked together: an appeal to interaction with the divine (the so-called vertical dimension) *and* with tradition (the so-called horizontal level). The latter refers to the cultural infrastructure including those who were its traditional guarantors, such as teachers.[116] The third element, then, regards a dynamic of opposition to the world of episcopal authority and sacramental power.[117] This leads Rousseau to conclude:

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112 Rousseau, 'Ascetics and mediators and teachers', 54.

113 Rousseau, 'Ascetics and mediators and teachers', 55.

114 Rousseau, 'Ascetics and mediators and teachers', 56; with a reference to Peter Brown, *The Making of Late Antiquity*, Carl Newell Jackson Lectures 1976 (Cambridge, MA 1978) 73–77.

115 Rousseau, 'Ascetics and mediators and teachers', 56–57.

116 Rousseau, 'Ascetics and mediators and teachers', 58.

117 Rousseau, 'Ascetics and mediators and teachers', 58; with a reference to the work of Rita Lizzi, *Il potere episcopale nell' oriente romano: rappresentazione ideologica e realtà politica* (*IV–V sec. d. C.*) (Rome 1987), 16–17, 21, 40, 46–47 (these bibliographical details are found on page 57 of Rousseau's article).

> The agenda for scholars now (…) is to distinguish adequately between the episcopal programme of homily and sacrament and the ascetic programme of wisdom, dialogue, and moral effort.[118]

Having thus taken into account the contexts of rhetorical and philosophical education, I will now focus on another, equally important, setting of 'the ascetic programme of wisdom, dialogue, and moral effort': early Christian pastoral care.

4 Early Christian Pastoral Care: Monastic and Apostolic Correspondence

Our starting point in this section on early Christian pastoral care is the practice of writing letters, and we will first consider a body of correspondence contemporaneous to the *Apophthegmata*. These letters originate from fourth- to sixth-century Egypt and Palestine and have been studied by Claudia Rapp.[119] Following Brown, the author notes that the role of the holy man or abba in late antiquity was similar to that of the philosopher.[120] This resonates with what we have seen in the previous section. It is Rapp's aim, however, to suggest another model, that of the intercessor.[121] In doing so, she focuses on a distinctively Christian notion of prayer. In her opinion, the holy man is primarily someone who intercedes for others, thus forming a community of prayer around him.[122] Rapp then goes on to discuss several letter collections, which reflect the focus on prayer in the daily life of the abba and his disciples.[123] Sometimes the correspondents offer prayers on behalf of the holy man, but more often the focus is on the saint as intercessor. While the letters contain general and formulaic requests for prayer,[124] they also include more specific pleas: to be healed but also—significantly—to be forgiven. This theme of forgiveness, related to the notions of sin, penitence, and penance, will be discussed further below.

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118 Rousseau, 'Ascetics and mediators and teachers', 59.
119 Claudia Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation": reflections on the rise of the holy man in late antiquity', 63–81 (see footnote 5).
120 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 66.
121 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 66.
122 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 66.
123 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 67.
124 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 68.

Moving away from an emphasis on the saint as wonderworker, Rapp writes: 'No mention of miracles is made in the letters to Paphnutius. Prayer is the glue which binds the holy man to his followers.'[125] The communal bonds that she describes are presented in terms of family relationships: the holy man is called father or *apa*.[126] Generally speaking, the authority of the spiritual father is based on his piety and a kind of spiritual family would evolve around such an authoritative figure:[127]

> loosely structured communities of monastic 'brothers' and lay people under the leadership of a spiritual father who were engaged in praying on each other's behalf.[128]

> (…) The Egyptian papyri and ostraka demonstrate the importance of holy men as intercessors and spiritual fathers of loosely-knit monastic 'families'.[129]

The familial dimension appears in various forms: in the language of father and son, representing the teacher-disciple dynamic, but also in the notion of brotherhood.[130] An important aspect of the relationship is the power of intercessory prayer in connection with sin. When discussing the *Letters of Barsanuphius and John*, situated in sixth-century Palestine, Rapp refers to the correspondence between one of the two holy men, Barsanuphius, and a brother named Andrew. The holy man quite confidently communicated to the brother that all Andrew's sins had been forgiven through the power of the abba's prayer.[131] Regarding this claim, it is important to remember that the efficacy of intercessory prayer correlated with the actual piety of the intercessor: the more pious the person who prayed, the more powerful his prayer.[132]

A significant aspect of the letter format is the way in which it functions as a vehicle of communication. While the basic form of interaction between ascetic teachers and their disciples was, as we have seen in section 1, that of 'highly personal and situational' one-on-one interaction, in this case the preferred mode of communication consists in written words. As Rapp notes:

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125 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 68.
126 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 68.
127 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 69.
128 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 71.
129 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 72.
130 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 74, 77.
131 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 72–77, esp. 75.
132 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 76. Cf. footnote 127.

> Oral communication between a holy man and his followers was the ideal, and letter-writing was the next-best form after it. The epistolary format mimics the direct contact between author and his correspondent. (…) The reader of a letter is drawn into the personal orbit of the author and feels as though he is being addressed as an individual.[133]

This dynamic of the reader who is drawn into the conversation represented by the letter not only applies to the actual first addressee of the letter, but also to later addressees—whether intended or unintended. Indeed, letters were sometimes written to specific recipients with a wider audience in mind.[134] In other instances, however, an elaborate readership was not originally intended but evolved spontaneously, as it did in the case of the *Apophthegmata Patrum*: the wisdom contained in the sources was highly valued and consequently the *verba* were copied, compiled, and transmitted to later generations. Rapp rightly links the format of the letter and its universalizing tendencies to the epistles of the apostle Paul: these were originally addressed to specific communities, with a limited focus in space and time, but came to be read as letters addressed to the whole church, speaking to an ever-expanding audience: 'As a means of religious instruction, they produced a tone of personal intimacy between the author and his public.'[135]

Fundamentally, Rapp wants to emphasize how practices of prayer contributed to the concept of spiritual family and to forms of spiritual direction within the community of the faithful. On the basis of papyri, ostraka, and letters, she argues for a supplicatory model of holiness, while pointing to the remarkable popularity of the letter format in early Christianity and linking it to the high value placed on bonds of kinship within local Christian groups.[136]

These elements, all closely related to the early Christian practice of pastoral care, are also present in the epistles of Paul, one of which I will now discuss

133 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 79; cf. the reference to K. Thraede, *Grundzüge der griechisch-römischer Brieftopik*, Zetemata 48 (Munich 1970), 157–187. Cf. also in this volume: Rianne Voogd, 'Is the Instruction to Greet One Another with a Holy Kiss a Pauline Transformation?', section 2.

134 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 79.

135 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 80. Cf. Harry Gamble, *Book and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven/London 1995), 36–37, 58–65.

136 Rapp, '"For next to God, you are my salvation"', 81.

on the basis of Abraham Malherbe's work.[137] Towards the end of his book on Paul and the Thessalonians, Malherbe highlights 'Paul's effort to form and nurture a community',[138] arguing that the apostle is highly motivated to create and sustain communities. In his letter, an expression of his motivational drive, he includes philosophical notions, for instance, the notion of exemplarity, which also occurs in the teaching of philosophical schools:[139]

> [I]mportance was attached to the personal example of a mentor. (…) The pattern provided by a teacher's life was prized because it lent concreteness to his teaching, thereby making it more persuasive. The teacher as model provided more than a moral paradigm. The teacher also offered security to those who looked to him for guidance.[140]

Thus, the apostle presents himself as a model to be followed, mirroring philosophical practice.

When describing the connection with his converts, he deploys existing imagery of a nurse who looks after children, but he adapts it, presenting an intimate picture of himself as a wet nurse suckling his children (1Thess 2:6–8).[141] He also refers to himself as a father, alluding to the relationship between teachers and students which resonated with the bond between fathers and sons.[142] Clearly, Paul's views on pastoral care were informed by methods of 'pastoral care' practiced by the philosophers of his day.[143] Let us now probe a little deeper and consider some specifics of his strategies.

After he had founded a community, Paul stayed in touch in different ways, continuing his work of nurturing from a distance. He basically did two things: first, he appointed a helper in his place, and secondly, he wrote letters.[144] The

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137 Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia 1987).

138 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 107.

139 The first chapter in the book is devoted to a different—albeit related—theme, conversion; this will not be discussed in the context of this article. See Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 5–33.

140 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 52–53.

141 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 54–55.

142 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 56. Cf. Rapp's emphasis on the notion of kinship and family discussed above, at the beginning of section 4.

143 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 58. Cf. Burton-Christie's work on philosophical traditions referred to above (section 3).

144 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 61–78. The chapter on nurturing the community follows chapters 1 and 2, which address the themes of founding and shaping the com-

letter signified the special relationship between Paul and his brothers and sisters in the faith: it represented part of the dialogue he was involved in with the faithful and in a sense it made him, the absent one, present. As such, the friendship between the apostle and his converts was affirmed and could be experienced. Indeed, despite the distance between Paul and the recipients of his text, spiritual direction could take place as he counselled them from afar.[145] Interestingly, his modes of counselling were quite similar to what we find in philosophical circles:

> The social, intellectual, and psychological difficulties experienced by members of philosophic communities were addressed by a well-developed system of pastoral care known as psychagogy, which included what we mean by spiritual exercises, psychotherapy, and psychological and pastoral counseling.[146]

Specifically, one might think of the Stoic philosopher Epictetus, of a Platonist such as Plutarch, and of Philodemus, a representative of Epicureanism.[147] Epictetus guided his students as a 'spiritual director',[148] and Plutarch also encouraged others to make moral progress.[149] Philodemus and the Epicureans, however, seem to present the most interesting case in point because, like the apostle, they created actual communities in which 'mutual exhortation' took place.[150] In this setting, friendship played a fundamental role and admonition happened within that specific social context. Significantly, the process of spiritual growth is described in medical terms with physicians applying the necessary medication at the appropriate time.[151] We will encounter this medical imagery again in relation to the Irish penitentials to be discussed below. Another element also relates to the theme of penitence and penance: the ability to adapt to differences in character and circumstance, as certain situations

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munity respectively (Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 5–33 and 34–60; cf. footnote 140).

145 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 69. Cf. Rianne Voogd, 'Is the Instruction to Greet One Another with a Holy Kiss a Pauline Transformation?', esp. sections 1 and 2.

146 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 81, with references to the work of Paul Rabbow, *Seelenführung. Methodik der Exerzitien in der Antike* (Munich 1954) and Hadot, *Exercices spirituels*, 13–70 (see footnote 98).

147 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 84–87.

148 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 82.

149 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 83.

150 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 84.

151 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 85–86.

demand a direct approach while other instances call for private instruction.[152] In summary:

> Whatever the group, and however it might be structured, they shared a concern for each other. Those who led in exhorting were to do so out of friendship and a desire to help. Throughout the discussions there is a stress on the need to give close attention to the psychological condition of those they intended to help and to adapt their exhortation accordingly. The exhortation should always be timely, preferably in private and thus individualized, and conducted patiently, without expecting immediate success. The recipients are urged to receive admonition willingly, with love, affection, honor, and gratitude to those who wish to help them and not be irritated and lash back at them.[153]

Finally, Malherbe lists a number of elements that relate directly to our topic. First, Paul's letter, and the philosophical traditions from which he borrows, contain the notion of living quietly (*hēsychazein*). This is also a crucial term in the *Apophthegmata Patrum*.[154] In Paul's context, emphasis is placed on 'quiet' in the sense of minding one's own business and the practice of manual labour: the latter is also fundamental to the monastic life depicted in the sayings.[155] Another important term, referring specifically to the relationships within the Christian community, is 'brotherly love' (*philadelphia*),[156] while its twin *philanthrōpia* is mentioned in connection with Plutarch. For Paul these terms refer to the fact that he wants his converts to 'love each other and work to support themselves' in order to 'gain the respect of outsiders'.[157]

5 Early Medieval Pastoral Care: The Irish Penitentials

Having considered the monastic practice of intercession and letter writing, as well as Paul's philosophically informed brand of pastoral care, I will now move forward in time to study the reception history of spiritual direction as depicted

152 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 86.
153 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 88.
154 See my contributions on *hēsychia* in book 2 of the Systematic Collection as referred to in footnote 77.
155 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 96–98. Cf. Harmless, *Desert Christians* 175–177.
156 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 102.
157 Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, 107.

in the desert sayings. In this section I will present one example of reception as a case study: the so-called Irish penitentials as discussed by Thomas O'Loughlin in *A History of Pastoral Care*. These penitentials represent a tradition of dealing with penance that was strongly influenced by the spirituality of the desert and which, in turn, deeply transformed other, continental traditions of pastoral care.[158] An important factor in these processes of transformation was John Cassian. Cassian was probably born around 360, and his native language was Latin, but he was also well-versed in Greek. He experienced monastic life first-hand: first in Bethlehem and later in the Egyptian desert where he became acquainted with many of the famous abbas we also encounter in the *Apophthegmata*. He probably left the desert when the Origenist Controversy broke out (c. 400) and eventually ended up in Gaul around 415, where he composed two major works on asceticism in Latin: *Collationes* and *Instituta* (*Conferences* and *Institutes*). These works depict the ascetics of the desert, their wisdom and their lifestyles. It is significant that Benedict recommends these works by Cassian as spiritual reading in the closing chapter of his famous *Regula*, dated to the first half of the sixth century.[159] In addition to the transmission of desert traditions by Cassian, an early version of the Systematic Collection of the *Apophthegmata* was trans-

158 My discussion is based on Thomas O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', in G.R. Evans (ed.), *A History of Pastoral Care* (London/New York 2000), 93–111. The introduction to this handbook by Gillian Evans provides a helpful framework for our theme (1–11), as does the contribution by Benedicta Ward, 'Pastoral care and the monks: "Whose feet do you wash?"' (77–89). Evans calls to mind Jesus' command to love God and one's neighbour as oneself as the foundational text from Scripture. The deep connection between faith in God and a relationship with one's neighbour defines pastoral care as, above all, a *social* reality. The second aspect is an intrinsic connection with the notion of *sin*: 'Throughout Christian history it has been taken that all human beings are spiritually in the wrong with God. If that is the starting point, it follows that there is something to be put right in every human soul. Pastoral care then becomes a matter of healing and restoration.' (1) Evans also draws attention to 'patterns (…) in which the learner sits at the feet of someone older, wiser, more experienced, a parent in the spiritual life'. (6) Another image relevant to our discussion is that of the journey, 'which clearly answers a need for a sense of spiritual growth and development. The soul goes on a pilgrimage to God; literally, in the stories of actual pilgrimages, but also inwardly.' (8) By implication, such '[a] conscious undertaking to find God involves concentration upon an inner life.' (9) Ward explores aspects of such an 'inner life' as tended to by the desert fathers: 'they were convinced that their life in the body of Christ was to be interiorized; it was in the place of solitude that reality was faced within.' (87).

159 See Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 373–378, for biographical information about Cassian. His works are discussed by Harmless in the remainder of chapter 12 entitled 'John Cassian': 379–403. Cf. also my 'The Spirituality of the Desert: Models of Appropriation by Henri Nouwen, Anselm Grün, and Kathleen Norris', *Religion and Theology* 24 (2017) 156–179, specifically 156–158.

lated into Latin around the middle of the sixth century by John and Pelagius, the former a deacon and the latter a subdeacon in Rome. Their translation became well-known in the West as the *Verba Seniorum* and deeply influenced Western monastic spirituality.[160] When Christianity started to spread in Ireland, from the mid-fifth century onwards,[161] it was very much impacted by monastic traditions, which—as we shall see—led to a unique, monastically informed, way of dealing with both the problems of sin and guilt and the remedial activity of penance as exemplified in the Irish penitentials.

It is important in this regard to note that Benedicta Ward points to repentance as the core activity of the monk.[162] She explains:

> What they faced in solitude was of course themselves, that central battleground of all the passions, and much of their literature was about this fight with the demons in themselves. Recognizing and dealing with their own failure, despair and sense of non-identity was their central work; it was because they were ready to open themselves to this work of God that they could be used by God for others.[163]

Thus, the monks were ordinary people who were willing to face their own brokenness in order to connect with others, from silence, by leading by example, but especially by interceding for them.[164] This approach implies a cluster of familiar themes including sin, repentance, penance, and intercession. These are all related to the theme of facing one's brokenness,[165] which will now be explored further in the context of the penitentials.

These penitentials were 'lists of sins and the fixed penances needed for their forgiveness', which developed in the context of the British Isles during the early Middle Ages.[166] In mid-fifth-century Ireland, two rather different approaches to sin existed, which both had roots in earlier Christian traditions inherited from the mainland.[167] The first entailed a heavy form of public penance which could

160 Harmless, *Desert Christians*, 170; cf. Nienke M. Vos, 'The Spirituality of the Desert', 162 (see previous footnote).
161 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 94.
162 Ward, 'Pastoral care and the monks', 81. See footnote 158.
163 Ward, 'Pastoral care and the monks', 87.
164 Ward, 'Pastoral care and the monks', 87.
165 Ward, 'Pastoral care and the monks', 87.
166 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 94 (important bibliographical references are included in the article's footnote 9).
167 Cf. O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 99.

be performed only once, while the second was situated in the world of monasticism where sin was seen as something that had to be dealt with continuously. In such a framework, conversion is in fact an on-going process. Leading the 'life of perfection', then, implies that one is also permanently involved in a 'life of penitence',[168] dealing with each sin appropriately. Interestingly, this latter form was more congenial to the way in which Old Irish law dealt with trespasses, namely through a fine system, in which the fee for an offence correlates with the nature of the transgression and the status of the parties involved.[169]

The first model is found in the oldest strands of Christianity. Originally, high ideals of holiness following baptism had implied that there could be no salvation for those who sinned after baptism.[170] When the persecutions took place and leaders of the church had to face the problem of the lapsed, that is, those who had recanted their faith under pressure, a tradition of public penance evolved. Such penance was, however, rare and in a sense it was as unique as baptism itself. Three capital sins were identified that required the rite of public penance to bring about forgiveness and re-admittance to the life of the church: apostasy, murder, and fornication.[171] In the long run, this system did not work because it was too harsh. It focused on major sins, lacking some expedient for smaller problems, and it involved public humiliation. This created a niche which the penitentials would eventually fill.[172]

The second approach to sin was rather different and originated in the monastic world: John Cassian provided a catalogue of sins which could be remedied by certain virtues. Even more significant was the fact that these sins and concomitant virtues were presented in terms of disease and medicine. The introduction of the catalogue and the medical metaphor had three major consequences for the perception of sin and its treatment. First, it envisaged penance not as punishment, but as medicine. Second, it led to emphasis on the individual, who had to be diagnosed personally, which in turn valued spiritual self-knowledge. Significantly, the person making the diagnosis was not primarily the bishop, but someone who cared for the monks' souls. This director of souls, so to speak, functioned more like a 'physician or trainer'. Thirdly, because the system addressed a variety of sins, it could focus on major and minor issues,

168 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 94.
169 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 98.
170 This is Tertullian's position in *De baptismo* 15, 16, and 18.
171 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 94–95. For a discussion of Cyprian's ideas on the possibility of forgiveness after apostasy, see J. Patout Burns Jr, *Cyprian the Bishop*, Routledge Early Church Monographs (London 2002).
172 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 95.

dealing with them in a continuous process that would last a lifetime.[173] Another crucial concept in this context[174] was the so-called 'baptism of tears':[175] a sign of contrition and compunction. O'Loughlin explains:

> When these two themes of penance as medicine and as contrition are combined in a pastoral context, the result is our penitentials.[176]

The earliest sources include a letter attributed to Patrick from the fifth century and the so-called *Penitential of Finnian*, which is dated to the late sixth century. Interestingly, the latter refers to a 'tearful penance' that soldiers who were guilty of apostasy and murder should undergo.[177] The most important development at this time was the expansion of the monastic movement and the way it impacted the lives of ordinary Christians. It meant that pastoral care was primarily provided by monks working within the jurisdiction of their abbots, rather than by clerics resorting under bishops.[178] The author calls this 'monasticization'.[179] Possibly, such monastic influences resonated with Old Irish Law, which typically allowed crimes to be punished by paying a fine.[180] This led to an intricate system of dealing with offences which were ranked according to a combination of the offence and the social status of both offender and victim.[181] Similar diversification and correlation concerning trespasses and penalties can also be found in the penitential texts. Another interesting phenomenon is the introduction of 'intention', an aspect that plays a role in the *Preface of Gildas on Penance* in determining the specific penance that has to be paid.[182] In a related sense, the *Penitential of Finnian* conceives of sin as an internal affair between the individual's conscience and God as the offended party. Thus, the notion of sin becomes internalized and a vital distinction is made between intention and the actual execution of a certain act.[183] Gradually, a pattern emerges in which one moves from sin to health via a process of sorrow and penance. The

173 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 96. The author focuses on Cassian without mentioning explicitly, however, that he was deeply influenced by Evagrius of Pontus.
174 Cf. section 2 of my contribution.
175 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 96, 101–102.
176 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 97.
177 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 97.
178 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 97.
179 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 98.
180 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 98.
181 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 98.
182 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 99–100.
183 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 101.

language of family appears once more, as Finnian interprets composing his pastoral handbook in terms of a father caring for his children.[184]

It seems that the *Penitential of Columbanus*, usually dated to the early seventh century, was the first to be used in continental Europe. It contains offences correlated with accompanying penances. In addition, the medical metaphor is used as physicians are mentioned to explain the notion of 'spiritual doctors (*spiritales medici*)'.[185] It should also be noted that this text too, despite its monastic origins, was meant for ordinary Christians.[186] The last Irish text discussed by the author is the *Penitential of Cummian*, which displays a deep sense of pastoral care, focusing on the theme of forgiveness.[187]

From Ireland and adjoining regions such as Anglo-Saxon England and Brittany,[188] the penitentials eventually spread to the continent, where they were confronted with the older and dominant traditions of public penance. Clergy were at first suspicious of the insular penitential tradition because it seemed to minimize the gravity of sins. But over time, it proved to be practical:

> the penitentials worked and so were used. To the pastor they provided a private and frequent means by which ordinary people could examine their lives and seek forgiveness. They answered the basic need of people to be able to express their sinfulness and then to put the past behind them.[189]

As has been noted before, the ritual of public penance took place under the jurisdiction of the bishop, but the early penitentials do not specify who should lead the process (priests are only mentioned from the ninth century onwards).[190] This is an important point, because it means that a new mode of pastoral care that was not clerical in origin was adopted by the clergy, and continued to exercise its influence in that way. The major shift was, then, that the church in the Latin West moved from a system of public and one-off penance to a policy that regarded penitence as private and on-going. Eventually, this generated a new ritual in which the priest became the spiritual director and the

184 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 102.
185 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 103; the quotation is from the Prologue of the penitential; the text can be found in L. Bieler (ed.), *The Irish Penitentials* (Dublin 1975).
186 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 103.
187 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 103 (discussion on 103–104).
188 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 104.
189 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 105.
190 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 106.

doctor of souls: the sacrament of confession.[191] This sacrament was defined by fundamental concepts deriving from the penitentials: the connection between the conscience of the individual and the grace of God as well as an emphasis on contrition in the process of healing the ravages of sin.[192] Apart from such a sacramental mode of spiritual direction, in which clerics played a crucial role, more informal forms continued to exist and were often exercised by lay persons. And when actual spiritual directors were lacking, Christians could always access the ancient wisdom of the desert fathers and mothers through the act of reading. It is time now to draw a number of conclusions on spiritual direction and the sayings of the desert.

6 Conclusion

In this contribution, I propose to interpret the encounters between the abbas of the desert and their disciples as rituals, based on the observation that the sayings reflect communal and physical instances of spiritual direction which are defined by repetition and a recognizable pattern.[193] In my investigation I focused on the formulaic introductory sentence that has become the iconic representation of desert spirituality: 'Father, give me a word'. Surprisingly, the exact word combination of '(Father,) give me a word' occurs only very rarely in the collections of the sayings. Does this mean, then, that it was relatively irrelevant despite its popularity in secondary literature? My answer would be 'no', because this sentence, while included far less frequently than expected, is connected in the majority of cases to the notion of 'salvation', which is a central theme in the sayings. Thus, the famous slogan, while appearing only rarely, symbolizes the basic objective of the sayings, which is both immediate and ultimate 'salvation'. Essentially, the anecdotes and words of wisdom are aimed at spiritual growth or, in other words, at a transformation of the soul by shaping and transforming one's physical life on earth.

The desert tradition of spiritual direction as such, however, can also be viewed in terms of transformation, because it is informed by pre-existing patterns of education. First, we focused on the role that rhetoric played in gener-

191 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 106–107.

192 O'Loughlin, 'Penitentials and pastoral care', 106.

193 See for this interpretation and definition of ritual, the contribution by Rianne Voogd in this volume, 'Is the Instruction to Greet One Another with a Holy Kiss a Pauline Transformation?', section 3.

ating the sayings, since both the notion of *chreiai* and the exercise of *ergasia*, which was dependent upon it, functioned in the curriculum of the rhetorical schools. Another link to the educational system of classical *paideia* relates to the scholastic traditions of philosophy. These were not only determined by intellectual efforts but involved the development of character, which was facilitated within the context of close bonds between master and student. Such intimate relationships of personal formation were often described in the familial terms of father and son. Another aspect of philosophical influence relates to the fact that in late antiquity, the philosophical school took on an increasingly religious character, which involved notions of transcendence and fusion with the divine. Similar to the dynamics in desert monasticism, the attainment of such high spiritual aims was facilitated by an ascetic lifestyle, which assisted meditation on authoritative texts and led to a life of moral virtue.

The educational representation of the abba in terms of philosopher and *paidagōgos*, however, must be complemented by another model, that of intercessor. This role is suggested by sources which perhaps provide us with the closest window into the historical reality of spiritual direction: letters. In these letters, we enter a more specifically Christian context of pastoral care as they witness to the centrality of prayer, and especially intercessory prayer which—in turn—points to the pervasive notion of dealing with sin. As in the philosophical context, we again encounter the familial language of father and son, but also that of brotherhood. In these monastic traditions, then, we find the notion of a 'spiritual family', which allows for varying degrees of intimacy: from the close connection between abba and disciple via a wider circle of monks, to a group of committed 'ordinary' Christians.

When we widen our scope, moving from the epistolary practices of monastic pastoral care even further into the past to consider the earliest and more general descriptions of community life in the letters of Paul, similarities are evident regarding the writing of letters and the language of family. In addition, we must conclude that Paul himself already reworked models of care for the soul as they had been developed in philosophical traditions. This means that the desert fathers were influenced by contemporary trends in philosophy as well as by pre-existing Christian ideas about pastoral care, which in turn mediated philosophical concepts. Thus, we were able to trace the transformation of both educational and pastoral traditions.

Subsequently, we discussed the reception of the monastic practice of spiritual direction, primarily in connection with penitential traditions in early medieval Europe. It has become clear that the personalized approach to spiritual development that is so characteristic of the sayings was a major factor in the production of penitential manuals on the British Isles during the early Mid-

dle Ages. Mediated by John Cassian, the monastic tradition conceived of sin not so much as a crime but rather as a disease. Consequently, its remedy was perceived as medicine, not punishment. The identification of sin was similar to a diagnosis and the treatment prescribed was related to the problem. In early penitential literature, the whole spectrum of sinful behaviour was addressed, from grave to minor trespasses, and dealing with sin was envisaged as a process. Just as in the ascetic traditions of the desert, an important role was attributed to intention and to a deep awareness of one's fault, leading to compunction and tears, which were seen as essential to the process of healing and restoration. This monastic approach to sin and spiritual growth 'monasticized', so to speak, the spiritual life of 'ordinary' Christians, and by implication the pastoral care that they received. These insular, monastically oriented views on pastoral care, condensed in penitential books that provided specific remedies for specific ailments, in time transformed penitential practices on the continent, which had been shaped by a system of penance that was radically different. Originally, there was no place for penance after sin in the early church: holiness had to be retained after baptism. Thus, there was no remedy for sin once one had been baptized. When the persecutions happened, however, and many of the lapsed desired to return to the ecclesiastical communities, the problem became urgent. Gradually, the possibility of penance was developed, but it was a dramatic option, as it could be performed only once and had to happen publicly. The focus of the original penitential system, then, was on the heaviest sins: apostasy, homicide, and adultery/fornication. When this continental form of penance collided with the 'insular' approach, it was transformed: a public and one-off event turned into a private and ongoing process. Eventually, the monastic way was integrated into the life of the church as the priest took over the role of the abba in a sacrament called 'confession'. Still, lay forms of spiritual direction remained, which allowed individuals to be counselled privately by men and women schooled in the spiritual life. And in the absence of an actual, physical spiritual director, the possibility always remained of reading the *Verba Seniorum*, the sayings of the fathers and mothers of the desert. In the end, individuals could contemplate their words of wisdom and the anecdotes about them, thus entering into an imagined pastoral relationship with them, mediated by the text, by way of re-enactment.

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CHAPTER 11

Tradition and Innovation: Writing Magic in Christian Egypt

Jacques van der Vliet

In a volume dedicated to early Christian rituals, a paper on magic may seem oddly out of place. Yet I will argue in the following pages that so-called Coptic magic is not only indebted in multiple ways to the formal repertoire of Christian liturgy, but that in its own right it represents a significant, though much understudied segment of early Christian ritual discourse.[1]

Late antique and early medieval Egypt, between about 300 and 1200, produced a rich corpus of more or less overtly Christian ritual texts and artefacts that are traditionally qualified as 'magic'. These are typically published in modern collections that advertise themselves as *Koptische Zaubertexte* or *Ancient Christian Magic*, to quote just two well-known titles.[2] Even though the term 'magic' may be considered inherently problematic, there can be no doubt that the corpus itself documents a phenomenon with a standing of its own, distinct from official church discourse and canonical liturgical practices.

Some qualifications are due here. First, this so-called corpus is anything but a unity. It is linguistically diverse, transmitted in both Greek and Coptic, the two written languages of late antique Egypt, and is characterized by a variety of genres, scribal styles and formats. The artefacts themselves comprise anything from simple amulets for single use, scribbled on a pot shard, to book-length rit-

1 This paper represents work in progress for a monograph *Christianizing Magic* (*Egypt, ca. 300–1200*). All translations from Coptic and Greek are mine.

2 These are A.M. Kropp, *Ausgewählte koptische Zaubertexte* (3 vols, Brussels 1930–1931; here abbreviated as *AKZ*) and M. Meyer and R. Smith (eds), *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco 1994; abbreviated as *ACM*); both works are indispensable for any serious study of the material, as is Th.S. de Bruyn and J.H.F. Dijkstra, 'Greek Amulets and Formularies from Egypt Containing Christian Elements. A Checklist of Papyri, Parchments, Ostraka, and Tablets', *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 48 (2011), 163–216. Other abbreviation: *PGM* = K. Preisendanz, *Papyri graecae magicae. Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2nd edition, ed. A. Henrichs (2 vols, Stuttgart 1973–1974). For further bibliography, see J. van der Vliet, 'Christian spells and manuals from Egypt', in D. Frankfurter (ed.), *Guide to the Study of Ancient Magic*, Religions of the Graeco-Roman World 189 (Leiden/Boston 2019) 322–350. The important monograph by Th. de Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian: Artefacts, Scribes, and Contexts* (Oxford 2017), only appeared after this paper had been submitted.

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uals that must have been part of the library of a practitioner. Most of them are isolated archaeological finds, usually without a known context. The situations on which they bear are likewise very diverse, even if most are concerned with protection of the physical and social self, as well as empowerment in the broadest sense, professional, sexual or otherwise. Unlike earlier forms of Egyptian magic, in which divinatory and mantic practices played a considerable role, Egypt's Christian magic is mostly a form of crisis management, envisaging a variety of critical daily-life situations.

Secondly, the texts never refer to themselves in the (negative) terms that were current in normative Christian literature, such as Greek μαγεία or Coptic ϩⲓⲕ.[3] In their own terms, that is from an 'emic' perspective, these texts were not 'magic', but for instance a '(means of) protection, a preservative', φυλακτήριον, or a 'prayer', εὐχή or προσευχή. In fact, many of them were explicitly aimed at counteracting the harmful effects of ϩⲓⲕ or μαγεία. This paper nevertheless retains the designation 'magic', in spite of its conceptual fuzziness and inherited negative overtones. It is used here as an 'etic' scholarly label, not as an explanatory category, but as a heuristic term referring to a distinct though heterogeneous body of late antique and early medieval texts and artefacts and the specific ritual and social practices which they embody.[4]

Finally, the coupling of Christianity and magic may seem strange or even offensive, familiar as many are with a supposed distinction or even opposition between religion and magic. As the following pages will amply show, magical discourse is religious discourse and, in the period under discussion, it was intellectually and socially firmly embedded in contemporaneous Christianity, even if it was not necessarily acceptable to and accepted by all strata of Christian society.[5]

In what follows, I will try to substantiate my claim that late antique and early medieval Egyptian magic represents a genuinely Christian form of ritual discourse by focusing on two phenomena. First, I will present some of the

3 For normative discourse about μαγεία (etc.) in Egyptian sources, see J. van der Vliet, 'Roman and Byzantine Egypt', in D. Frankfurter (ed.), *Guide to the Study of Ancient Magic*, Religions of the Graeco-Roman World 189 (Leiden/Boston 2019) 240–276.

4 In this way, the discussion tries to steer clear of both 'essentialist' attempts at defining magic (for the aporia to which these give rise, see e.g. J.N. Bremmer, 'Preface: The Materiality of Magic', in D. Boschung and J.N. Bremmer (eds), *The Materiality of Magic* (Paderborn 2015), 7–19, at 10–12) and overly negative positions that propose to abolish the term 'magic' as a significant scholarly category, represented e.g. by B.-Chr. Otto, *Magie: Rezeptions- und diskursgeschichtliche Analyse von der Antike bis zur Neuzeit* (Berlin/New York 2011).

5 For a largely analogous case, that of Jewish magic, see the able defense of the term by G. Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic: A History* (Cambridge 2008), 8–69.

strategies by which traditional, non-Christian ritual came to be framed or, perhaps more accurately, grounded in Christian discourse. Secondly, the creation of novel and typically Christian ritual formats will be discussed. As both subjects actually demand monograph-length treatment, their discussion here will necessarily be brief and selective. In a concluding section, I will propose a model that attempts to situate the processes in question in a broader picture of early Christian culture.

1 Reframing Traditional Ritual

Biblical names and liturgical formulae appear already in the predominantly pre-Christian corpus of Greek and Demotic magical papyri from Roman Egypt. Usually attributed to a Jewish background, in fact such elements do not, in the majority of cases, reflect an effort at creating a specifically Jewish magic. Instead, they are a witness to the Egyptian scribes' ability to forge an inclusive ritual idiom, feeding on diverse cultural and religious traditions, following the principle of *bricolage*.[6] A well-known example of this procedure is the use of originally Hebrew divine names such as Yao, Adonai and Sabaoth, mixed up with traditional Egyptian or Greek elements in such a way that they can hardly be read as the expression of a religiously Jewish identity.[7] Similarly, the stray Christian formulae that occur in some of the later manuals of the *PGM*, attributed to the third or even early fourth century, still pertain to the same inclusive idiom.[8]

The Christianization of Egypt in the fourth century inaugurated a paradigmatic change that involved a progressive redefinition of the efficacy of magical ritual in the terms of a new religious idiom. This process affected both form and content of the rituals, but was never fully completed. While Egyptian magical texts from late antiquity indeed attest to an astonishingly rapid Christianization, they are simultaneously witness to the remarkable longevity of more

6 In the present context, the *ad hoc* selection of heterogeneous elements with a view to optimal ritual efficacy; cf. D. Frankfurter, 'Demon Invocations in the Coptic Magical Spells', in N. Bosson and A. Boud'hors (eds), *Actes du huitième Congrès international d'études coptes, Paris, 28 juin–3 juillet 2004* (Leuven 2007), vol. 2, 453–466, at 458–459; for the cultural strategies of Egyptian magicians, J. Dieleman, *Priest, Tongues, and Rites. The London-Leiden Magical Manuscripts and Translation in Egyptian Ritual (100–300 CE)* (Leiden 2005).

7 See Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, in part. 196–201; cf. R. Boustan and J.E. Sanzo, 'Christian Magicians, Jewish Magical Idioms, and the Shared Magical Culture of Late Antiquity', *HTR* 110 (2017), 217–240, at 220–226.

8 For a discussion, see de Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 69–75.

ancient traditions, some of them of a conspicuously non-Christian character. Christianizing the tradition could take a variety of forms, three of which will be briefly illustrated below, mainly in order to show the complexity of the processes involved, which range from fairly straightforward reframing to rewriting and even overwriting or supplanting traditional ritual.

A well-known Coptic charm against pain in the belly recounts an extensive *historiola*, a magical narrative, that stages a dialogue between the deities Isis and Horus and belongs to a type that can be traced back as far as the Egyptian New Kingdom, around 1200 BC (*AKZ* 2, III; *ACM* 49b).[9] Nothing in this long charm betrays its transmission in a Christian milieu except for the abbreviated name of Jesus, which precedes the charm proper, and a brief concluding formula. In the latter, the voice of the performer suddenly takes over from the goddess Isis, stating with some emphasis: 'It is me who enchants (ⲙⲟⲩⲧⲉ); it is the Lord Jesus who grants healing' (verso, l. 8). The formula clearly distinguishes between the practitioner who recites the spell, the 'I', and the divine source of healing, Jesus himself, whose name already opened the text.[10] The charm about the pagan gods Horus and Isis is therefore literally framed by Christian formulae that identify Jesus as the ultimate supernatural power in charge, yet leave the essence of the traditional spell unaffected.

A late Coptic charm against 'binding' of the face, preserved in an amulet on paper of about the tenth or eleventh century, likewise echoes traditional, though not overtly pagan motifs.[11] Mysterious snakes that rise from the sea are evoked as models for the freedom desired for the patient's head. As with the Isis-Horus charm, Christian or at least biblical influence is only noticeable in

9 The latest edition of the papyrus (Berlin P. 8313) is W. Beltz, 'Die koptischen Zauberpapyri der Papyrus-Sammlung der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin', *Archiv für Papyrusforschung* 29 (1983), 59–86, at 65–67; for its ancient antecedents, see in particular J.F. Borghouts, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts* (Leiden 1978), no. 49. The *historiola* will be discussed separately below.

10 A nearly identical statement concludes the throughout Christian charm that occupies the first column of the recto of the papyrus (*AKZ* 2, XVII; *ACM* 49a, l. 17–18, partly restored), thus confirming its formulaic character; see also the next paragraph and D. Frankfurter, 'The Laments of Horus in Coptic: Myth, Folklore, and Syncretism in Late Antique Egypt', in U. Dill and Chr. Walde (eds), *Antike Mythen: Medien, Transformationen und Konstruktionen* (Berlin/New York 2009), 229–247, at 242–243.

11 The text was discovered not long ago at Saqqara; see G. Favrelle, '[Texte] copte: F 17.10', in C. Ziegler (ed.), *Les tombes hypogées de Basse Époque F7, F17, H, j1, Q, n1* (Paris/Leuven 2013), 460–462, ph. 49; for its traditional background, see J. van der Vliet, 'Charming a Clogged Nose: A Late Coptic Magical Spell from Saqqara', *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 18 (2018), 145–166.

a tripartite final statement that explicitly identifies the supernatural source of the desired healing:

> It is Yao who unbinds you.
> It is Adone who sets you free.
> It is Eloe who provides you with the way to be redeemed.[12]

The use of the three 'Hebrew' names of God, Yao, Adone (Adonai) and Eloe (Eloi), which have a long history in Egyptian magic, is itself not sufficient to mark a particular text as Jewish or Christian, as was observed earlier.[13] Yet the analogy with the formula concluding the Isis-Horus spell, which likewise uses emphatic cleft sentences ('it is N. who …'), suggests that a deliberate effort is similarly made here to Christianize a traditional charm. Again, the charm itself retains its original character, but in the end its power is formally subordinated to the superior power of the biblical God.

A rather sophisticated example of Christian framing is offered by a spell for divorcing a couple, a *diakopos*, that can be dated fairly precisely to the sixties of the fourth century and that was transmitted in Manichaean circles. It is preserved as an appendix to a private letter that ended up in Ismant el-Gharab (ancient Kellis), in one of Egypt's Western oases.[14] Although it is relatively well-known, it deserves to be quoted *in extenso*. The text is bilingual, partly in Greek and partly in Coptic, and is reproduced here with italics added to mark core terms and paragraph numbers to bring out the structure of the text (some words are missing or unknown):

> 1A. [Greek] I invoke you, the one who is from the beginning, the one who is seated above Cherubim and Seraphim,
>
> 1B. [Coptic] the one who governs *disputes* and *quarrels*, the one who calmed the *winds* through his great power (cf. Matt 8:26?), just as you made the land of Egypt dominant and cast *quarrels* over the Chaldeans (cf. Jer 37:5)![15]

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12 After van der Vliet, 'Charming a Clogged Nose', 147, 11–15.

13 See note 7 above.

14 *P. Kell. Copt.* 35, ed. I. Gardner, A. Alcock and W.-P. Funk, *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis*, vol. 1 (Oxford 1999), 224–228; cf. P. Mirecki, I. Gardner and A. Alcock, 'Magical Spell, Manichaean Letter', in P. Mirecki and J. BeDuhn (eds), *Emerging from Darkness: Studies in the Recovery of Manichaean Sources* (Leiden 1997), 1–32.

15 An expected 'thus'-phrase seems to be lacking, but is—in a way—filled in by the remainder of the ritual.

2A. It is over you (plur.) that I utter these names:

you, O dung (?) that produces *black* ⟨...⟩, may the heart of N.N., the son of N.N., ⟨and N.N., the daughter of N.N.⟩, become *black* towards each other!

O ... natron from Arabia, just as you can *wash away* everything, (thus) you shall *wash away* the desire that exists between them for each other!

And you, O *burning* of the mustard, you shall put into their heart *burning* and *scorching* for each other!

2B. The house in which I will deposit you (sing.), do not leave it without having raised *dispute* and *quarrel* and *thunder* between N.N. and N.N., (and) inversely (between) her, N.N., (and) N.N.

3. You shall utter these words over them (i.e. the ingredients).

4. Finished.[16]

The core of the spell (par. 2) consists of a religiously neutral ritual involving three different natural ingredients (a kind of dung, natron, and mustard), each distinguished by a particular conspicuous material quality (blackness, corrosiveness, and burning) and addressed in the second person. The ritual demands the application of these qualities by way of analogy to the situation of the couple whose divorce is desired. In the first-person utterances marked 2A and 2B, the reciter comments on his own performance, reaching the climax of the spell in the emphatic statement of the desired effect of the ritual in 2B. The metatextual part 3 contains instructions for the performance of the ritual that makes the magic work. The 'you' is now the performer who has to pronounce the spell of par. 1 and 2 over the three ingredients, which must subsequently be placed within the house of the victims (according to 2B). Through the ritual, the very qualities of the prescribed ingredients are transferred to the (undesirable) relationship between the victims.

By contrast, the first paragraph of the spell shows definite liturgical and biblical inspiration. The 'you' who is addressed here is the Godhead. The opening formula (par. 1A) is an invocation of a type well known from the Psalms (compare for instance the opening verse of Ps 79, LXX) as well as from the pre-Christian magical papyri (for instance *PGM* VII, 246 or 634). It uses a distinct linguistic code, Greek, as a textual marker of the spell's sacredness (Greek, not Coptic, remained the primary liturgical language of Egypt for many centuries).[17] Following this generally phrased opening invocation, par. 1B consists

16 *P. Kell. Copt.* 35 ro. 1–22.

17 In a different way, the brief statement of our final paragraph 4 formally marks the end of the spell and helps framing the text as 'different' and sacred.

of a series of Coptic invocations that specifically refer to God's power over the elements, in particular the wind, and over disputes and quarrels, following the same principle of analogy ('just as …') that underlies the ensuing address of the three ingredients. Formally these invocations mimic liturgical prayer, adhering to what is known as *Paradigmengebet* ('prayer by examples'), an often litany-like enumeration of mostly biblical instances of the manifestation of divine power, asking for a similar manifestation in an analogous situation here and now.[18] Through its formal appeal to liturgical formulae, the whole of the first paragraph may be said to spell out the religious propriety of the ritual and vouchsafe its efficacy. In spite of its rather early date, the text—as it circulated in the mid-fourth century—shows the pervasive influence of Christian or Christianized ritual speech in framing a religiously neutral and most likely traditional ritual that employs the symbolic properties of natural ingredients.

Traditional ritual procedure could itself be profoundly Christianized. In order to illustrate this, we will first briefly return to the spell against pain in the belly quoted above (*AKZ* 2, III; *ACM* 49b), which in its core is a typical traditional charm, staging the pagan deities Isis and Horus.[19] Its strongly formalized *historiola* recounts how Horus (= the patient) goes catching birds and falls ill due to a ritual offense, eating sacred birds (aetiology),[20] how he then establishes contact with his mother Isis, which allows the repetition of the aetiological narrative and, finally, how Isis responds by blaming Horus for having failed to find her powerful name, which should provide the desired healing. The character of the spell as a charm devised for oral performance is apparent in the many repetitions and multiplications and the important role assigned to dialogic direct speech, kept together by a rather summary narrative. The narrative itself follows an almost universal fairy-tale structure: a hero (= the patient) sets out on a journey, meets a complication, seeks supernatural help and finds it, but the implied happy end, the desired healing of the patient's aching belly, is presumed, not narrated.

A charm against fever, discovered in 1993 during excavations at the ancient monastic site of Naqlun in the Fayyum province, retains the formal literary structure of the Isis-Horus charm against belly ache, but drastically innovates

18 For the *Paradigmengebet* in Coptic magical texts, see Kropp, *AKZ* 3, 234–240; general: E. von Severus, 'Gebet I', *RAC* 8 (1972), 1134–1258, at 1255–1256.

19 On the genre of the charm and its characteristics, see J. Roper, 'Towards a Poetics, Rhetorics and Proxemics of Verbal Charms', *Folklore* 24 (2003), 7–49; for its plausible importance in the (oral) transmission of pre-Christian material in Coptic, see Frankfurter, 'The Laments of Horus'.

20 That this is the correct interpretation is shown by the New Kingdom ancestor, mentioned above in note 9.

on the levels of aetiology and characters.[21] Here, the *historiola* relates how an unnamed patient (N.N.) sets out in the heat of summer and encounters Scorching Wind, a personification of fever, who makes him ill (aetiology). He flees and succeeds in finding Jesus who is being bathed by his mother Mary. N.N. now repeats to Jesus the aetiological story, telling him how he became infected with fever, and Jesus responds by blaming him for having failed to find his name or the names of his Father, the Virgin Mary, and various angelic powers.

The structure of the narrative, the prominence of dialogue and the elements of repetition and multiplication up to and including the role assigned to the name of the divine healer might have been copied from the earlier Isis-Horus charm. The differences are twofold. The most obvious one is on the level of the characters. Horus and Isis have been replaced by an anonymous patient and Jesus respectively. A no less remarkable sign of Christian rewriting concerns the aetiological narrative that opens the charm. Whereas in the older spell Horus falls ill from eating sacred birds, this form of ritual offense had lost its significance in a Christian milieu. Instead, the aetiological story is now told in the typical form of the *Begegnungssegen* ('encounter charm'), relating the patient's encounter with a personified source of illness or evil, in the present case Scorching Wind.[22] The result is a near-perfect example of literary pseudomorphosis, retaining basic ritual structures while innovating those elements of the narrative that were conspicuously non-Christian.

Finally, a third strategy for reframing traditional ritual involves a form of supplanting or, better, overwriting. Such processes of textual supersession may be difficult to grasp in a situation where our sources lack the original performatory context. A traditional oral rite that is textually overwritten does not necessarily leave a trace in the written ritual designed to supplant it. The process is therefore best illustrated by a contemporary rite, the so-called Prayer of the Basin (in Arabic *Ṣalât aṭ-ṭašt*), a rite that enjoys official status within the Coptic Orthodox Church, but is unknown in any of the other Oriental churches. In modern liturgical books, it is printed as an appendix to the rite of baptism, although it has nothing to do with baptism.[23] It is an optional service of blessing, performed by a priest seven days after the birth of a male child at the home of the

21 P. Naqlun 78/93; edition: *P. Naqlun Copt. 1: The Magical Texts and Related Material*. Edited by I. Saweros and J. van der Vliet (Warsaw, forthcoming); the manuscript may date from about the 10th century.

22 For the genre of the *Begegnungssegen*, for which Egyptian magic offers interesting early examples, see F. Ohrt, 'Über Alter und Ursprung der Begegnungssegen', *Hessische Blätter für Volkskunde* 35 (1936), 49–58.

23 Thus, in the Coptic Orthodox *Kitâb al-ma'mûdiya al-muqaddasa* [The Book of Holy Baptism] (Old Cairo 1921), 120–125 (Arabic and Bohairic Coptic text).

parents. It consists of prayers and readings from Holy Scripture that are to be said over the basin of water in which the child is supposed to be washed for the first time.[24] Nothing in the written text of the Prayer of the Basin shows that it actually represents the ecclesiastical appropriation of an unwritten and even scarcely documented apotropaic ritual that starts as soon as the priest has left the house. This latter ritual is performed not by a cleric, but by the midwife or an older female member of the family and mainly involves complicated and fairly wild dancing around and above the newborn baby to scare away the evil spirits.[25] It is customary in Upper Egypt, where it is (or was) current among both Muslims and Christians. Whatever its antiquity or origins, the traditional apotropaic rite has been overwritten by the de-folklorized and textually codified Prayer of the Basin. The latter, however, does not contain any overt reference to the rite to which it owes its existence, but which it also seeks to transcend. Apart from passing references in the ethnographic reports of outsiders, the original rite remains invisible in the written record.

The examples given here show some of the mechanisms (framing, rewriting, overwriting) by which various traditional (pre- or non-Christian) rituals may become incorporated in Christian ritual discourse, not as badly disguised survivals of a pagan past, but as witnesses to the interaction of tradition and innovation. If anything, they demonstrate the dynamics of ritual discourse, not the refractory conservatism that is still today often associated with the term magic.

2 Shaping Christian Magic

Innovation is also the key-word to the creation of new, specifically Christian ritual formats. Most of these are characterized by the wholesale appropriation of the forms of Church liturgy for every-day purposes, others are less easy to account for. In what follows, I will pass over the novel ways in which the power of Holy Scripture was tapped for amuletic purposes, as these have been the subject of a number of important recent studies,[26] and focus on some less known

24 See R.M. Woolley, *Coptic Offices* (London 1930), 55–58 (English translation); O.H.E. Burmester, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church* (Cairo 1967), 113–114 (English summary). To the best of my knowledge, nothing is known about the antiquity of the rite, which is certainly older than the 17th century and may be of medieval date.

25 I had the chance to attend both ceremonies at the home of a Coptic student in 2012. For customs connected with the seven days period after birth in modern Egypt, see W.S. Blackman, *The Fellāḥīn of Upper Egypt* (London 1927), 76–81.

26 Most notably, Th. de Bruyn, 'Appeals to Jesus as the One "Who Heals Every Illness and

phenomena. First, a few examples of the magical appropriation of liturgical forms will be briefly presented (*Paradigmengebet*, epiclesis, prayers attributed to powerful patrons); then, something more will be said on the unique genre of the invocatory liturgies, that seem to be a genuine creation of late-antique Egypt.

The separation spell from Kellis, discussed above, shows how the so-called *Paradigmengebet* was used as a means of reframing traditional ritual already in the fourth century. The *Paradigmengebet* offers a wonderful combination of miniature *historiolae*, vignette-like evocations of past manifestations of divine power, often referring to well-known biblical episodes, with the powerful ritual form of the litany. It is hardly surprising therefore that it continued to play an important role in shaping Christian magical texts.[27]

A similarly impressive form of liturgical prayer is that of the epiclesis, which in a general sense is the invocation of a higher power over a particular material substance. More specifically, the epiclesis of the Holy Spirit over bread and wine is a core moment of the Orthodox Eucharist and its importance is duly reflected in the magical corpus.[28] One brief example may suffice here, taken from a composite Prayer of the Virgin Mary, which will be discussed below. In one episode the Virgin addresses the Godhead thus:

> [You who dissolve all illness and all activity] that contains envy, I implore you and ask you that you descend upon this vessel of water and everything that it contains, and that you dissolve all activity that harms N.N., all sorcery and all magic, in the name of the seven strong archangels that stand by and protect me, through the power of your holy name.[29]

As later parts of the Prayer of the Virgin Mary show, this vessel of water occupies a central place in the performance of the ritual. In the passage quoted,

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Every Infirmity" (Matt 4:23, 9:35) in Amulets in Late Antiquity', in L. DiTomasso & L. Turescu (eds), *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity* (Leiden 2008), 65–81; J.E. Sanzo, *Scriptural* Incipits *on Amulets from Late Antique Egypt: Text, Typology, and Theory* (Tübingen 2014); Th. de Bruyn, *Making Amulets Christian*, 139–183.

27 See the references in note 16 above.

28 See Kropp, *AKZ* 3, 183–196.

29 After the early Giessen manuscript of the prayer, ed. A.M. Kropp, *Oratio Mariae ad Bartos. Ein koptischer Gebetstext aus der Gießener Papyrus-Sammlungen* (Giessen 1965), 6, I, 1–10; for the slightly different Greek version, see A. Łajtar and J. van der Vliet, *Empowering the Dead in Christian Nubia. The Texts from a Medieval Funerary Complex in Dongola* (Warsaw 2017), 89, l. 13–15 (text), with 103 (translation) and 151–152 (commentary).

God is asked to empower the water in order to make it a weapon against the much dreaded effects of envy and sorcery. The ritual forms of the liturgy are mimicked so as to create new forms that cater to specific needs, for instance, for protection or healing.

The Prayer of the Virgin Mary from which this example is taken belongs to the broader genre of powerful prayers, for which—also in Coptic—the Greek terms εὐχή or προσευχή are normally used. Prayer as a genre of magical discourse is not a Christian innovation, of course. Famous examples from the pre-Christian Egyptian corpus include *PGM* IV, 2785–2890, a prayer (εὐχή) to Selene 'for any application', or the 'prayer (προσευχή) of Jacob', *PGM* XXIIb, 1–26, which may have a Jewish background.[30] Yet powerful prayers became probably the most popular and characteristic of all Christian magical genres. In parts of the Greek speaking world, προσευχή is till today specifically a word for a magical spell.[31]

Just as in the case of the previously mentioned Prayer of Jacob from *PGM* XXIIb and better known Old Testament or early-Jewish models, such as the Prayer of Manasse (*Oratio Manasse*, one of the Odes), prayers could be given authority by attributing them to well-known patrons, in Christian texts almost always saints. These are usually central figures in Christian piety, such as the Virgin Mary or the Archangel Michael, but also contemporaneous holy men, such as Severus of Antioch, the sixth-century champion of miaphysite (anti-Chalcedonian) orthodoxy.[32] Alternatively, they could be ritual specialists themselves, such as Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus (the Wonderworker, ca. 213–275), to whom a long apotropaic prayer is attributed, preserved in both Greek and Coptic,[33] or the legendary Cyprian of Antioch, a converted magician.[34] The story of the saint as known, for instance, from the liturgical calendar served as a kind of *historiola* that could merely be alluded to in order to vouchsafe the

30 Cf. Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*, 207, n. 181.

31 Ch. Stewart, *Demons and the Devil: Moral Imagination in Modern Greek Culture* (Princeton 1991), 222, 243, n. 26; Kropp's chapter on prayer as a form of Coptic magic, in *AKZ* 3, 217–244, although partly obsolete, is still extremely valuable.

32 C. Römer, 'Gebet und Bannzauber des Severus von Antiochia gegen den Biss giftiger Tiere, oder: Maltomini hatte Recht', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphy* 168 (2009), 209–212, replacing earlier editions.

33 Greek: A. Strittmatter, 'Ein griechisches Exorcismusbüchlein: Ms. Car. C 143b der Zentralbibliothek in Zürich, II', *Oriens Christianus* 26 (1932), 141–144; Sahidic Coptic: W. Pleyte and P.A.A. Boeser, *Manuscrits coptes du Musée d'antiquités des Pays-Bas à Leide* (Leiden 1897), 441–454; *ACM* 134, text 1.

34 Under the many prayers attributed to Cyprian, a superb but slightly repulsive erotic spell in Coptic (*ACM* 73) stands out.

spell's efficacy. Backed by the authority of the saint, part of this prayer literature even entered the *Euchologion* of the Greek Orthodox Church.[35]

For the present purpose, the term 'prayer' is used as a broad generic label, denoting an authoritative address of the supernatural, not a specific literary form nor a particular type of piety. The most pervasive characteristic of this genre is its oral focus. Although they are the written products of a literary culture, the texts are entirely geared towards live oral performance. The most characteristic and lengthier examples have an episodic structure and are often patchwork compositions, incorporating ritual elements of very diverse provenance in order to obtain optimal persuasive effect. They may comprise a variety of invocations and adjurations, hymn-like or litany-like as well as narrative passages, strings of names, vowel series and frequent repetitions. Parts of the texts, such as the vowel series, must have been sung, while others were quite likely metrically organized.

The Prayer of the Virgin Mary, quoted above, is a good example of such a patchwork ritual.[36] It is authenticated and given authority in a brief prologue by Jesus himself, who promises his mother that 'on account of this holy prayer (προσευχή)' she will be able to subject 'all powers of the adversaries' (Greek version, l. 1–2). In the actual ritual that follows, which in the edition of the Greek text occupies five printed pages, no less than eighteen different episodes can be distinguished, not including the prologue and the final *praxis* that offers detailed instructions for the performance. The eighteen episodes include diverse invocations of the Godhead, adjurations invoking various classes of angels, the chalice of the Last Supper and elements of the divine world, such as the celestial veil (καταπέτασμα), a version of the Sanctus,[37] an epiclesis (a version of which was quoted above) and a prayer for angelic protection that derives from the Jewish 'Bedtime *Shema*',[38] just to give an indication of the variety of the material. All these elements are presented in an order that may seem

35 For this genre of prayers, see Th. Schermann, 'Die griechischen Kyprianosgebete', *Oriens Christianus* 3 (1903), 302–323; id., *Spätgriechische Zauber- und Volksgebete: Ihre Überlieferung* (Borna/Leipzig 1919).

36 For the (late but presumably original) Greek text of the prayer with a full commentary referring to the extant Coptic versions, see Łajtar and van der Vliet, *Empowering the Dead*, 80–177.

37 Cf. Th. de Bruyn, 'The Use of the Sanctus in Christian Greek Papyrus Amulets', in F. Young et al. (eds), *SP* 40 (Leuven 2006), 15–19; id., *Making Amulets Christian*, 191–195.

38 For the 'Bedtime *Shema*' and its antecedents, see D. Levene, D. Marx and S. Bhayro, '"Gabriel Is on Their Right": Angelic Protection in Jewish Magic and Babylonian Lore', *Studia Mesopotamica* 1 (2014), 185–198; for its use in Coptic magic, H.J. Polotsky, 'Suriel der Trompeter', *Le Muséon* 49 (1936), 231–243.

haphazard at first sight. Yet this seemingly rambling text retained its general character and much of its over-all structure from the end of the fifth century, when it was probably composed, till around the year 1100, the date of its latest copy, on the walls of a tomb in Dongola (in Nubia, present-day Sudan).[39]

A much similar composition, also attributed to the Virgin Mary, is conventionally called the Prayer of the Virgin *ad Bartos*. It is first attested in a medieval Coptic manuscript and still today used in Arabic and Ge'ez versions in Egypt and Ethiopia.[40] The longevity of these prayers attests to their lasting authority, which was textually constructed along two lines. The attribution to the Virgin Mary anchored them in the core domain of Christian doctrine. The use of a wide variety of persuasive means and strategies built up their ritual efficacy.

These Prayers of the Virgin illustrate how purported prayers developed and expanded, assimilating very diverse materials. The same principal of ritual *bricolage* underlies the closely related genre of what I prefer to call, in defiance of ancient terminology, invocatory liturgies, a designation that underlines both the oral character and the structural complexity of the texts. On the level of the contents, the invocatory liturgies may be described as a sustained effort on the part of the performer to gain access to the celestial world, using a wide range of ritual and textual means. In addition to the normative liturgy of the Church, they draw upon a variety of biblical, apocryphal and hagiographic sources, not all of which have been convincingly identified by modern scholarship. The Macquarie Codex, the Heidelberg Praise of the Archangel Michael (P. Heidelberg Kopt. 686)[41] and the lengthy exorcism of Rossi's Gnostic Tractate,[42] offer particularly impressive examples of this procedure, all preserved in Coptic only.

Some of the invocatory liturgies came to be incorporated in so-called handbooks, as is the case with the recently published Macquarie Codex.[43] In the typical format of the handbook, the lengthy invocatory section, for which the terms λόγος, 'spell', or εὐχή 'prayer', may be used, is followed by an appended series of 'cases', offering recipes for a wide range of practical applications of the ritual. The instructions for each of these cases are usually kept brief and matter-of-fact. The series of twenty-seven recipes in the Macquarie Codex, numbered in the original, begins thus:

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39 For an analysis and comparison of the different versions, see Łajtar and van der Vliet, *Empowering the Dead*, in particular 128–142.

40 The Coptic version is *AKZ* 2, XXXIX; cf. Łajtar and van der Vliet, *Empowering the Dead*, 128–133, referring to the Ethiopic and Arabic versions and to the earlier literature.

41 *ACM* 135; ed. A.M. Kropp, *Der Lobpreis des Erzengels Michael* (*vormals P. Heidelberg Inv. Nr. 1686*) (Brussels 1966).

42 The deceptive title is modern and conventional. The text is *AKZ* 1, R, translated in *ACM* 71.

43 M. Choat and I. Gardner, *A Coptic Handbook of Ritual Power* (*P. Macq. I 1*) (Turnhout 2013).

1. When someone is possessed: (say) the spell over linseed oil and pitch. Anoint them.
2. For any sickness: (say) the spell over Spanish oil and gum ammoniac. Burnt offering. Anoint them, anoint them.
3. When someone is annoyed with you: write the names of the right side and those of the left side and the kin of (the angel) Eremiel. Write two injunctions (with) myrrh ink. (Say) the spell over them and (sprinkle?) some water. Before he has (come) to his door, bury one at his door; bind one to your right forearm with a strap.[44]

Whatever this-wordly concerns may be reflected in these recipes, the invocatory sections that precede them, the actual liturgies, are almost exclusively focused on the other world, the realm of the divine with all its attributes and its various classes of spiritual beings. Their main addressee is the Godhead himself under one of his designations, some of them quite enigmatic such as Bathuriel or Baktiotha,[45] but the focus may episodically shift to other inhabitants of the celestial world, in particular the angels. What is conspicuously lacking in even the most extensive of them is a systematic demonology, for which the famous *Testament of Solomon* might have offered a model.[46] Demons may be invoked in their own right, in particular in curses and separation spells,[47] yet in this textual genre they are identified only in very general terms, if at all.[48] Instead, the rituals assault the powers of heaven with a sophisticated array of textual means. The most common way in which this is done is by means of formulae of adjuration that allow the author and the performer full scope for showing their vast knowledge of the names, functions and hierarchies of the celestial world and its inhabitants.

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44 Ed. Choat and Gardner, *Coptic Handbook*, 66, 17–68, 7.

45 For the first, see Łajtar and van der Vliet, *Empowering the Dead*, 158–161; for the second, K. Dosoo, 'Baktiotha: The Origin of a Magical Name in P. Macq. I 1', in P. Buzi et al. (eds), *Coptic Society, Literature and Religion from Late Antiquity to Modern Times*, vol. II (Leuven 2016), 1237–1244.

46 The *Testament of Solomon* was, of course, not unknown in Christian Egypt, see e.g. the references in J.-C. Haelewyck, *Clavis Apocryphorum Veteris Testamenti* (Turnhout 1998), under 162.

47 Discussed in Frankfurter, 'Demon Invocations'.

48 No demonology, but an interesting classification of harmful human agents is found in the Prayer of Gregorius Thaumaturgus (see above n. 31); Coptic: Pleyte and Boeser, *Manuscrits coptes*, 446; Greek: Strittmatter, 'Griechisches Exorcismusbüchlein', 142 (cf. the enumeration at 143, much reduced in the Coptic).

The Heidelberg Praise of the Archangel Michael and the Macquarie Codex may be quoted here briefly as examples of typical 'invocatory liturgies'. In the Heidelberg text, the ritual proper is preceded by a title and a prologue, which call it an ἔνδοξον, 'glorification, song of praise', and claim the authority of Michael himself. In the prologue, Michael appears in a role that is familiar from the many Coptic homilies devoted to the cult of the archangel, placing himself before the throne of God to implore his mercy in favour of mankind:

> Michael did obeisance to the feet of the good Father. He stood upright, planted his wand before him and left his chariot behind. He stretched out his wings of light and called out, saying: …[49]

What follows is indeed a song of praise, interspersed with narrative passages, prayers and, in particular, long series of adjurations that evoke a vivid picture of the celestial world and even the Godhead himself in all his glory, as the following sample shows:

> I adjure you today by the great golden base, upon which your throne is standing.
> I adjure you today by the golden pair of sandals that are on your feet, the name of which is Batha.
> I adjure you today by the golden support that is on top of your throne, to wit Thiel.
> I adjure you today by the great purple robe, the name of which is Mariel.
> I adjure you today by the garment of light that clothes you, the name of which is Thoel.
> I adjure you today by the great book in your hand that bears the seven seals (cf. Rev 5:1) and in which the ordinance of what is in heaven and what is on earth is inscribed.
> I adjure you today by your exalted arm that holds the foundations of the earth and the gates of heaven.
> I adjure you today by the glory of the light of your two eyes, Thol and Thoran.[50]

The Macquarie Codex and similar compositions introduce scraps of celestial topography, partly mirroring terrestrial realities:

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49 Ed. Kropp, *Lobpreis*, 13, 1–5.
50 Ed. Kropp, *Lobpreis*, 27, 90–97.

> (You), whose name is Tauithe (i.e. Daveithe), you are the origin, the mother of all origins; you are the father of the twenty-thousand angels and archangels. It is you who are governing the tree that grows on the shore of the river Euphrates, where there is the great eagle whose front is lion-faced and whose back is bear-faced and who pleads for the souls of the humans, twelve times a day, until rest shall be given to them. When he flies out, his wings are about an *aroura* (about 2.700 m^2); when he rests, his dwelling-place is an *aroura*. His flying and his resting are in Kabaon AKB Kabatha. Indeed, his true name is Kabaon.[51]

Naming the supernatural and plotting it upon a map places the performer in a position of authority vis-à-vis the divine or angelic powers he wants to address, but no less vis-à-vis his clients, who can hardly hope ever to attain a similar level of technical knowledge of the transcendental.

Since celestial topography and procedures of mapping and naming the divine can also be observed in a number of Christian Gnostic texts, in particular so-called Sethian texts (or Barbelo texts), such as the *Apocryphon of John* or the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, it is not astonishing that precisely for the class of Coptic magical liturgies Gnostic influence has been claimed.[52] This was done by Father A.M. Kropp already in the 1930s, in the third volume of his *Ausgewählte koptische Zaubertexte*, and very recently again by Malcolm Choat and Iain Gardner for the Macquarie Codex, published by them in 2013. Their claim is by no means far fetched, as for instance the Four Luminaries, Harmozel, Oroiael, Daveithe and Eleleth, already known from the second-century Gnostic source used by Irenaeus of Lyons in his refutation of the Gnostics, are found—apart from Sethian Gnostic sources—almost exclusively in Coptic magical rituals. For the Macquarie handbook, the case for Gnostic influence may seem particularly strong, in spite of the late date of the manuscript (assigned to the seventh-eighth centuries by the editors). It is, in fact, the only non-Gnostic text presently known where the female divine figure of Barbelo is figuring. The opening invocations appeal to the celestial Jesus as:

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51 Ed. Choat and Gardner, *Coptic Handbook*, 54, 16–56, 4.

52 I dealt at some length with this matter in an article in Dutch, 'Gnostiek en magie: Barbelo en de vier hemelse lichten [Gnosticism and Magic: Barbelo and the Four Celestial Luminaries]', in A.P. Bos and G.P. Luttikhuizen (eds), *Waar haalden de gnostici hun wijsheid vandaan? Over de bronnen, de doelgroep en de tegenstanders van de gnostische beweging* (Budel 2016), 179–193.

> Christ who lives in heaven, the one who was begotten at the right side of the Father—it was Barbelo, the living Wisdom, who was filled from the two loins of the Father and has begotten for us a perfect living man. He was sent for us to the world and gave his blood on behalf of the living and the dead, so that he redeemed us from our sins.[53]

These lines could easily be read as the elaboration, in very physical terms, of a passage in the famous *Gospel of Judas*, a presumably second-century Gnostic text known from a fourth-century manuscript, where Judas says to Jesus:

> I know who you are and from where you have come. You have come from the immortal aeon of Barbelo, and the one who sent you is him whose name I am not worthy to pronounce.[54]

In spite of such suggestive analogies, however, the whole phenomenon of the liturgies that evoke celestial landscapes and hierarchies is perhaps best connected to a common ancestor, a 'magical cosmological system' that underlies both the Sethian Gnostic descriptions of the heavenly world, with their complicated unfolding of the divine, and the liturgies transmitted by the magical prayers and handbooks.[55] Whatever their origins may be, for the present argument it is more important to emphasize that in both cases we are dealing with analogous performative conceptualizations of a basically Christian celestial hierarchy.

3 Further Questions and a Model

The examples quoted above may suffice to show that the rapid spread of Christianity in the course of the fourth century was not merely a matter of accepting a new doctrine or shifting social allegiances. It also imposed new paradigms for ritual discourse. The latter process is graphically reflected in the rich and varied corpus of magical texts from late-antique and early-medieval Egypt, preserved in both Greek and Coptic. These texts reveal the dynamics of a vivid interaction between tradition and innovation, as is visible in the reframing and rewriting of

53 Ed. Choat and Gardner, *Coptic Handbook*, 44, 15–22.

54 R. Kasser and G. Wurst, *The Gospel of Judas. Critical Edition* (Washington, D.C. 2007), 189, 15–21.

55 For the claim of such a system, underlying Gnostic Barbelo texts, see R. van den Broek, *Gnostic Religion in Antiquity* (Cambridge 2013), 26–28.

traditional ritual, as well as creative efforts at shaping new, genuinely Christian ritual idioms that are both distinct from and depending on canonical Christian discourse, as witnessed by lengthy liturgies and patchwork prayers attributed to central figures within Christian piety.

In addition, the quoted examples have shown that the study of this material offers major challenges. Over the last century, a considerable scholarly effort has been devoted to collecting, deciphering and interpreting the often extremely difficult texts. A huge amount of work remains to be done, however, in particular with respect to these texts as cultural artefacts. What was their cultural and religious status and how did they receive their textual form? And how were they and their authors and performers perceived socially and who exactly were these authors and performers? The texts themselves do not provide direct answers to these questions. Nevertheless, they allow some observations about their performance and transmission over time.

The lists of practical 'cases' that are appended to the liturgies of the handbooks link them directly to every-day social practices, connected for instance with healing (nos. 1–2 of the listed cases in the Macquarie Codex, quoted above) and conflict management (no. 3 of the same list). The cases in question each require, beyond various other ritual acts, such as anointing the sick or producing an amulet, the recitation of the liturgy. The social status of such a performance is not immediately obvious. It may have been a purely domestic ritual, but even then it must have been a rather solemn, more or less public performance, involving minimally the kin of the sick or possessed persons. As it seems unlikely that the average attendee would be able to follow the often extremely convoluted and learned spells, it seems more likely that the authority of the ritual was to a large degree dependent upon the authority of the performer or purveyor of the texts.

The performers and *a fortiori* the authors/copyists of these rituals must have been literate persons of considerable standing within contemporaneous Christian society. The youngest, Greek version of the Prayer of the Virgin, quoted several times above, was found inscribed in the tomb of a Nubian archbishop of Dongola who died in 1113.[56] This particular context suggests a link with the highest strata of society in the then Christian kingdom of Makuria, of which Dongola was the capital. For late-antique Egypt, too, it is hardly conceivable

56 This is the version edited in Łajtar and van der Vliet, *Empowering the Dead* (see above n. 34); for the ritual ensemble, see ibid., 241–302, and J. van der Vliet, 'Literature, Liturgy, Magic: A Dynamic Continuum', in P. Buzi and A. Camplani (eds), *Christianity in Egypt: Literary Production and Intellectual Trends. Studies in Honor of Tito Orlandi* (Rome 2011), 555–574.

that the erudite *bricoleurs* who composed this and similar texts were deviant outsiders, as the conventional picture of 'magicians' would suggest.

To account for the status of magic in a Christian society, it has become customary to appeal to Robert Redfield's influential model, which proposes a dialectic interaction between a 'great tradition', that of—for instance—normative Christian discourse, and a 'little tradition', namely that of the unwritten practices of rural society.[57] Yet our texts represent a literate tradition in its own right, one that is not the unreflected textual embodiment of oral practices. Even when pre-Christian charms, which may have been transmitted primarily via oral channels in a domestic environment, surface in writing, they tend to be textually adapted to the dominant Christian paradigm and transposed to fit standard literary formats. The prayers and liturgies discussed above are not improvised rituals, but scholarly compositions of great complexity, the textual transmission of which can in some cases be followed over many centuries and in various countries beyond Egypt. At the same time, this literary tradition is in both form and substance different from the 'great tradition', represented for instance by Church liturgy and the normative discourse of patristic and monastic literature. A binary model, like Redfield's, hardly does justice to complex literate societies such as late-antique Egypt, where literacy may have been relatively restricted, but writing enjoyed enormous prestige, leaving room for a variety of literary practices and traditions.

Elaborating on Redfield's model, it seems more attractive to situate the magical literature of Christian Egypt in a three-tiered model, at the intersection of, on the one hand, the world of textually inarticulate social practices and, on the other, that of canonical Church discourse. The latter provides the hegemonic paradigm with which the written magical tradition maintains a dialectic relationship in terms of adaptation and borrowing, no less than differentiation. A similar dialectic relationship must have existed with the world of social practices, only—for students of a past society—these remain largely invisible. This is the tradition of the domestic rituals that surround birth and socialization, where demons and envy are important social actors, the domain of the alarming *exotiká* of Orthodox Naxos, known from Charles Stewart's superb study.[58] These traditions are no separate worlds and the three tiers, if they can be called such, are interconnected in all kinds of ways. Magical rituals mimic very

57 For a recent discussion, see D. Frankfurter, 'The Great, the Little, and the Authoritative Tradition in Magic of the Ancient World', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 15 (2014), 11–30. The classic statement of the model is R. Redfield, *Peasant Society and Culture* (Chicago 1956; reprint 1965), in particular 40–59.

58 Stewart, *Demons and the Devil*.

specific forms of liturgical prayer, such as the epiclesis or the *Paradigmengebet*. Inversely, prayers with very practical apotropaic applications have entered the Greek *Euchologion*. Elaborate written rituals, such as the Egyptian Prayers of the Virgin, are responding to the need for protection against the invisible agency of envy and sorcery. And, as the example of the Prayer of the Basin shows, an official rite of the Coptic Orthodox Church for blessing a newborn boy can only be understood for what it is in light of the unwritten apotropaic ritual that is was meant to overwrite.

The model outlined above can perhaps best be illustrated by the example of a related Christian culture, that of modern Ethiopia. The Ethiopian *däbtära*, a kind of cantor, has on behalf of his function intimate knowledge of the liturgy and access to the written heritage of the Church of which he is an (unordained) representative.[59] At the same time, he is a professional who provides a wide range of non-ecclesiastical ritual services, writing and illustrating amulets, performing healings and exorcisms, etc., on the basis of traditional knowledge obtained through training with older *däbtäras*. To be sure, in Christian Egypt no exact equivalent of the Ethiopian *däbtäras* as a separate class of specialized professionals seems to have existed. What little information can be gained about scribes and copyists of magical texts and purveyors of amulets rather points towards literate monks and deacons. Their status would give them both authority and access to the written heritage of the Church, similar to the *däbtäras*, and allow them to cater to the needs of the various strata of Egypt's Christian society.

If this model be accepted, the argument can be taken one step further. Egypt's Christianized magic is in this view more than a vivid illustration of the profound religious changes of the period, but itself a motor of religious change. Situated at the intersection of unwritten social practices and the great tradition of Egyptian Christianity, Egypt's Christianized magic may have played a far more central role in the spread of Christianity to all strata of society than has hitherto been assumed. In the domain of ritual crisis management, its role may be compared to that of the martyrs' cult in the sacralisation of time (calendar) and space (landscape). Rather than being a kind of deformity, a blot upon the white garment of religion, magic was a means of profoundly anchoring Christianity in Egyptian society.

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59 It is David Frankfurter's merit to have introduced the *däbtära* into the debate about later Egyptian religion; see his *Religion in Roman Egypt: Assimilation and Resistance* (Princeton 1998), 213, 260, and id., 'The Laments of Horus', 236–237. For a lively portrait of a *däbtära*, see J. Mercier, *Asrès, le magicien éthiopien. Souvenirs 1895–1985* (Paris 1988); for further literature, S. Kaplan, 'Däbtära', *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* 2 (2005), 53–54.

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CHAPTER 12

'I Will Wash My Hands in Innocence; so I Will Go around Your Altar' (Ps 26:6): The Washing of Hands in Rabbinic Judaism

Leon Mock

In the second half of the 20th century the study of ritual in Judaism received a new impulse.* Studies were published that discussed subjects like prayer and liturgy, Shabbat and Festivals, life cycle rituals, magic,[1] folklore and custom.[2] While earlier studies focused mainly on historical and philological dimensions, more recently, insights from social studies like sociology and anthropology have been incorporated.[3] New fields of study have also included Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah and its rituals.[4] In the post-1948 Israeli context, a renewed interest is visible in commandments and rituals that are connected to the Land of Israel, as found in the Bible and Rabbinic literature. Contemporary studies in Halakhah (Jewish religious and ritual Law) also show an increased interest in ritual as studied in the context of ritual studies with its focus on body, gestures, space and the like. Ritual as an event and performance are keywords in these new studies in Rabbinic Halakhah, for instance in the recently published *The Halakhah as Event*.[5]

The study of daily ritual in Halakhah has so far been less developed. In this article I want to explore the different contexts in which the washing of hands is discussed by the Rabbis of the Babylonian Talmud, which formed the basis for praxis for Rabbinic Judaism from the Middle Ages on.[6] Furthermore, I will

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1 The studies of J. Naveh, S. Shaked, M. Bar-Ilan and, more recently, Yuval Harari. See also, for example, M. Bloom, *Jewish Mysticism and Magic—an anthropological perspective* (London-New York 2007).

2 See, for example, the series *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore*, which has been published by Magnes Press since the early 1980s.

3 For example, H.E. Goldberg, *Jewish Passages: Cycles of Jewish Life* (Berkeley 2003); I. Gruenwald, *Rituals and Ritual Theory in Ancient Israel* (Leiden 2003). S. Fishbane, *Deviancy in Early Rabbinic Literature* (Leiden 2007).

4 The studies of G. Scholem, M. Idel and, for example, M. Chalamish.

5 A. Rosenak (ed.), *The Halakhah as Event* (Jerusalem 2016).

6 References to tractates from the Babylonian Talmud are indicated by 'b', followed by the

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show a number of later developments that are partly based on the Talmudic texts and their medieval commentaries, and another source of influence: the Kabbalah.

1 Purity

The Talmudic laws on the washing of hands are part of a wider discourse of Rabbinic discussions on biblical law. In part, these relate to the Book of Leviticus which contains a significant number of laws that relate to the purity or impurity of persons, food, objects and animals (mainly Lev 11 and 14–15). The washing of clothes, the immersion of the human body in water, the cleansing of the body with 'living water', or the washing of the hands after touching an impurity (in the specific case of a man with a genital discharge—the *zab*)[7] are all biblical methods for lifting the impure state of a person. For priests additional laws of holiness apply,[8] such as the daily requirement to wash their hands and feet prior to service in the Temple (Exod 30:18–21). In the Second Temple era these purity laws were further developed among different Jewish groups: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes/Qumran-based groups, and other possible sects.[9]

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title of the specific tractate. All Talmudic quotations are from *The Babylonian Talmud*, ed. I. Epstein (London 1935–1952).

7 Lev 15:11. The implication may be that the washing of hands by the *zab* (somebody with an abnormal secretion from his genitals) somehow diminishes the impact of his impurity on other persons (or objects and food), see H.K. Harrington, *The impurity systems of Qumran and the Rabbis* (Atlanta 1993), 86–87. Although this verse is indeed referred to as a kind of scriptural proof for the washing of the hands in bChullin (Chullin literally means 'profane things') 106a, others explain this washing of the hands as immersing the whole body in water, see Sifra (the halakhic midrash to Leviticus), Parashat Zavim, Parasha 2:4.

8 On the important difference between purification and sanctification in connection with the washing of hands before eating, and the possible development in Tannaitic literature from purification of the hands to sanctification of the hands by priests prior to their Temple service, see Y. Fürstenberg, 'Hand-Washing in Tannaitic Literature: From Purification to Sanctification' [Hebrew], in I. Rozenson et al. (eds), *Minchat Sapir: Festschrift for Y. Sapir*, (Elkana-Rechovot 2013), 107–130.

9 See, for example, Jub. 21:16; Josephus on the Essenes in *War of the Jews* 2.123, 129, 138–139, 149–150; 4QMMT; mYadayim 4:6–7, and mChagiga 2:5 (m refers to the Mishnah; Yadayim literally means 'hands'; Hagiga 'festival offering'). A good overview of the different forms and uses of ritual washing can be found in J.D. Lawrence, *Washing in Water: Trajectories of Ritual Bathing in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature* (Atlanta 2006), although he does not pay much attention to the specific ritual of the washing of hands in a lay context because hand-washing is common in Second Temple Literature mostly in connection to the Temple and its rituals, with a few exceptions, see Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 57.

After the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, in the course of time most of these biblical laws lost their relevance in Rabbinic Judaism, except for some specific cases such as the laws about menstruation in the context of marital relations, the dietary laws, and the washing of hands prior to a meal. The latter will be familiar to Christians, as this washing of hands before a meal is a point of controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees.[10] When Christianity developed as a separate religion, it seems to have distanced itself from biblical and Rabbinic ritual connected to purity. Rabbinic Judaism for its part seems to have intensified its ritual affiliation in these areas of purity that are still relevant on a daily basis, as will be made clear below in connection with ritual handwashing.

2 Prayer

The first context in which handwashing is found in the Talmud is that of the morning prayers said upon rising early at dawn.[11] As a kind of 'proof' from Scripture, Ps 26:6 is quoted: 'I will wash my hands in innocence and walk around Your altar, O Lord'. Although a metaphorical interpretation of the washing of hands is the most plausible here,[12] the Rabbis changed the plain meaning (*pshat*) of the text as they did with many verses from Scripture. The Altar is associated with bringing animal sacrifices into the Temple, which were replaced by the worship of God through prayer after 70 CE.[13] So according to the Rabbis in the Talmud the verse seems to suggest that before praying—which is the same as making a sacrifice—one is obligated to wash one's hands, in the same way priests were required to do prior to their service in the Temple.[14] Whether the obligation of washing one's hands before prayer only applies to the case of morning prayer, or also to afternoon and evening prayers is not clear from the Talmud, since the context seems to relate explicitly to the morning. Maimonides and other later *decisores* (important Halakhic authorities) state that the washing of hands is also required for the afternoon and evening prayers.[15]

10 Mark 7:1–23, Matt 15:1–20.

11 bBerachot 14b–15a, 60b. ('Berachot' means 'blessings'.)

12 See Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 36. The metaphorical use of washing the body, hands, or clothes can be mostly found in prophetic literature and in hagiography, see Lawrence, *Washing in Water*, 38 although elsewhere (56), he seems to follow a different interpretation.

13 bBerachot 26b.

14 bBerachot 15a.

15 Maimonides (1138–1204, Spain and Morocco), Laws of Prayer 4:1–3; *Tur* OH 233; *Shulchan Aruch* OH 233:2 and Mishnah Berurah ad loc. (subparagraph 15).

3 Morning Spirits

A different reason for washing the hands in the morning—not necessarily connected to prayer—is found in bShabbat 108b–109a:

> He [R. Muna] used to say: If the hand [be put] to the eye, let it be cut off; the hand to the nose, let it be cut off: the hand to the mouth, let it be cut off; the hand to the ear, let it be cut off; the hand to the vein [opened for bloodletting], let it be cut off; the hand to the membrum, let it be cut off; the hand to the anus, let it be cut off; the hand to the vat, let it be cut off: [because] the [unwashed] hand leads to blindness, the hand leads to deafness, the hand causes a polypus.
>
> It was taught, R. Nathan said: It is a free agent, and insists [on remaining on the hands] until one washes his hands three times. R. Johanan said: Stibium removes [cures] the Princess, stops the tears, and promotes the growth of the eye-lashes. It was taught likewise, R. Jose said: Stibium removes the Princess, stops the tears, and promotes the growth of the eye-lashes.

Although the context of this section seems to be medicinal—referring to treatment of the body in general and of eyes, wounds, and bruises in particular, as well as mentioning food and herbs with medicinal properties—the medieval reception of this text tended more towards the demonic-magical. The text was explained as warning against injury to the body by an evil spirit (Ruakh Ra'ah),[16] which, according to some commentaries, was named 'free agent' (Bat Chorin)[17] or 'Princess' (Bat Melech),[18] and which enters the body through the orifices, or pollutes liquids (and other foods) in the vat.

Some medieval commentaries connect the above text in bShabbat 108b–109a with the following Talmudic discussion in bYoma 77b (and parallel bChullin 107b):

> Our Rabbis taught: It is forbidden to wash part of the body [on the Day of Atonement], as [it is forbidden to wash] the whole body. But if one was soiled with mud or excrement, he may wash in his usual way without any fear (…) The School of R. Menasseh taught: R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said:

16 Rashi (famous medieval Talmud commentator from France, 1040–1105) ad loc.

17 Rabenoe Chananel (famous medieval Talmud commentator 10–11th c., Tunisia) ad loc.

18 Ritva (R. Jomtof b. Abraham Ashbili, famous medieval Talmud commentator 13–14th century, Spain) ad loc.

> A woman may wash one of her hands in water to give bread to an infant without any fear … Why that? Abaye said: Because of Shibta.[19]

According to Rashi (11th century), this Shibta is the same evil spirit as that referred to in bShabbat 108b–109a, or according to the Talmudic glosses of the Tosafists,[20] it is a spirit that rests on bread that is given with unwashed hands to a young child, who might choke on it.[21] The Kabbalistic book of the *Zohar* expounds extensively on this evil spirit that rests on the hands after a person wakes up in the morning and connects it to the departure of the soul during sleep. It adds stringent instructions for this washing—for the way it is performed—and forbids any use of the water.[22] The washing on account of the evil spirit, as distinct from washing in the context of prayer, is also codified in the halakhic codices of the *Tur* (R. Asher, 14th century) and the *Shulchan Aruch* (R. Josef Karo, 16th century)[23] in chapter 4 of *Orach Hayim*, the section that deals with daily praxis and ritual.

4 Toilet

The Talmud contains a number of texts that relate to the washing of hands after relieving oneself in a toilet (or in the open field). In this context, the Talmud relates to the Talmud practice—abolished long before the Talmud was edited—that a person who had defecated had to immerse his body in a ritual bath (*mikve*), while someone who had only urinated had to wash his hands and feet.[24] In the Talmudic discussion on this Temple practice of washing one's hands after urinating, it is explained that the reason for this is because the person's hands are not clean.[25] Other texts refer to the washing of hands after relieving oneself because the person in question will be praying afterwards,[26]

19 It is not clear from the Talmudic passage what the term 'Shibta' means exactly. Medieval authors explicitly link it to a demonic context. The tractate Yoma concerns Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement (yoma = 'the day').

20 Famous medieval school of Talmudic commentators in Germany and France (12th–14th c.).

21 Rashi and Tosefot ad loc.

22 *Zohar* Introduction 10b, Bereshit 53b, Wayishlach 169b, Wayeshev 184b and Miketz 198b.

23 Both codices are important for the development of Rabbinical Law and practice in the early modern period.

24 bYoma 28a.

25 bYoma 29b–30a.

26 bBerachot 14b–15a: 'Rabbi Johanan also said: If one desires to accept upon himself the

or will continue his meal during which food will be eaten which requires the washing of the hands prior to consuming it, or because one has to say a blessing over the food. There does not seem to be a practice of the washing of hands from a hygienic perspective after relieving oneself in a toilet when one's hands are clean.

Medieval halakhic literature like *Orchot Chayim* by Aaron HaCohen from Lunil (13th century), *Sefer Hatashbetz* (Simon b. Tzemach Duran, 14–15th century), and the *Mordechai* (Mordechai b. Hillel, a famous 13th-century Talmudist and Halakhist), all add the washing of hands after leaving a toilet: 'he who exits a toilet' (or 'he who goes from the toilet'), as the Mordechai writes in his book *Sefer haMordechai*. This formula seems to imply a washing even when the hands are clean, or when one simply entered a toilet but did not relieve oneself or urinate there. In fact, this washing is codified in the *Shulchan Aruch* too.[27] This development may be explained by the growing influence of the mystical source of the *Zohar* (13th century). In reference to the toilet the *Zohar* has the following:

> Why then, one might ask, is it forbidden during the day—when he does not sleep and his spirit did not leave him, and no Impure Spirit rests on him—after a visit to the toilet, to recite the blessing and to learn a word of Torah without washing his hands? And if they were to say: 'because they [the hands] are dirty', this is not the case because how did they become dirty?! But, woe to those who do not know or pay heed to their Master's honour, and do not realize what the world is founded upon. In every toilet in the world there is a spirit that feeds on dirt and excrement, and that settles down upon the fingers of a human hand (…)[28]

The *Zohar* emphasizes the spiritual element of 'dirt'—the fingers are clean physically—but nevertheless the impure Spirit (which feeds on the physical dirt of excrement) attaches itself to the nails of the finger.[29] The Talmudic vision of the Ruakh Ra'ah on the other hand focuses on physical dirt.

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yoke of the kingdom of heaven in the most complete manner he should consult nature and wash his hands and put on tefillin and recite the Shema' and say the tefillah: this is the complete acknowledgment of the kingdom of heaven.'

27 OH 4:18.

28 *Zohar* Introduction 10b, English translation by Dr. Brian Heffernan, the English version of my PhD (in print) Leon Mock, *The concept of 'Ruakh Ra'ah' in post-1945 Rabbinic responsa literature: a case study of the relation between knowledge of the physical world and traditional knowledge* (Dutch, PhD thesis Tilburg University 2015).

29 Several reasons are given for why the nails of the fingers are vulnerable as a place for the

5 In the Context of a Meal

The Talmud elaborates on different washings in the context of a meal. Hands must be washed before meals at which bread is eaten: this is called the First Waters (*mayim rishonim*).[30] Not all Talmudic texts explicitly connect the washing of hands with the actual eating of bread. Some of these texts deal with food in general or wine,[31] and perhaps only with touching these foods,[32] while other texts suggest that they refer to (the eating of) bread,[33] or actually do so explicitly.[34] The Babylonian Talmud gives two reasons for washing hands prior to eating: as a stipulation regarding *terumah* (heave offering for the priest) that is intended to enforce eating the *terumah* in purity, or because of a Rabbinical decree without a (specified) reason that nevertheless should be followed.[35] A third reason of hygiene (*nekiut*) seems to be suggested in a Talmudic text that deals with the Rabbinic decree that unwashed hands are impure because 'they are always busy' and may touch impurities.[36]

In addition to these First Waters, a few texts refer to the so-called Middle Waters (*mayim emtza'im*). This is the washing of hands between dishes, apparently from a practical esthetical-hygienic point of view (cleansing the hands of

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impure spirit to rest on: *Zohar* Vayakhel 208b relates it to the fact that man's nails are made out of a residue of holy material which covered Adam prior to his sin. The nails themselves are of a kind of sacred nature and therefore appear as 'points of attachment' for the negative forces of the Other Side and its impurity. The *Ben Ish Chai* (R. Yosef Hayim, Bagdad 19–20th c.), Parashat Toledot (year 1, subsection 1) relates it to the idea that the hands and the feet (and the nails) are the furthest away from the source of holiness in the human body, his soul in the head.

30 On handwashing prior to a meal, see for example J. Magness, *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit: Jewish Daily Life in the Time of Jesus* (Grand Rapids 2011), 17–25.

31 mBerachot 8:2 (bBerachot 51b) about the differences between Beth Shammai and Beth Hillel concerning the right practice with regard to a (bread) meal: 'Beth Shammai says that washing of the hands precedes the filling of the cup, while Beth Hillel, say that the cup is first filled and then the hands are washed.'

32 mChagiga 2:5. See also J. Rosenblum, 'The Unwashed Masses: Handwashing as a Ritual of Social Distinction in Rabbinic Judaism' (draft), lecture held in Erfurt on 15 June 2017 and Ch. Milikowsky, 'Reflections on Hand-Washing, Hand-Purity and Holy Scripture in Rabbinic Literature', in M. Poorthuis and J. Schwartz (eds), *Purity and Holiness: The Heritage of Leviticus*, Jewish and Christian Perspectives 2 (Leiden 2000), 149–162, esp. 150–152.

33 mYadayim 2:2,4; bChullin 107b ('prusa', a piece of bread).

34 As bSotah 4b does ('Sotah' is the name for a woman who is suspected by her husband of adultery), and bChullin 107b on the mother feeding her child a piece of bread, see above.

35 bChullin 106a. See for more on impurity of the hands, Terumah and the Temple context Ch. Milikowsky, 'Reflections on Hand-Washing', 149–162.

36 bShabbat 14a.

food particles), and is considered 'optional' (*reshut*)—unless one of the dishes is meat and the other cheese (or a dish containing other dairy products).[37] Based on bPesachim 76b, some medieval *decisores* forbid eating meat and fish together without washing hands in between, because they regard the consumption of a mixture of meat and fish as unhealthy and as leading to leprosy.[38] The hands are washed again at the end of the meal—this is called the Last Waters (*mayim acharonim*) which is mandatory. The Talmud gives a rational reason for this, namely, that the hands are cleansed of food particles in this way, which is especially important because this cleansing is followed by the Grace after the Meal: blessing in cleanness is considered to befit the holy context of the blessing. These Last Waters also seem to be connected to a sphere of danger, in contrast to the other two washings:

> R. Judah the son of R. Hiyya said: Why did [the Rabbis] say that it was a bounden duty to wash the hands after the meal? Because of a certain salt of Sodom which makes the eyes blind. Said Abaye. One grain of this is found in a kor of ordinary salt (…) Abaye said: At first I thought the reason why the last washing may not be performed over the ground was that it made a mess, but now my Master has told me: It is because an evil spirit rests upon it.[39]

It is not clear what this 'evil spirit' exactly consists of. What follows in the Talmud is a longer discussion by Abaye of all kind of dangers that should be avoided in which spells, magic, spirits, and demons play a role.[40]

Washing hands before eating fruit is optional and is motivated by hygienic concerns, although others regard someone who washes his hands before eating fruit as haughty, which seems to be the conclusion of the Talmud.

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37 bChullin 105b. For an analysis of the Talmudic text on separating dairy and meat during a meal, see D.C. Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity Through the Ages* (New York 2007) 41–43.

38 bPesachim 76b: 'A fish was roasted together with meat, [whereupon] Raba of Parzikia forbade it to be eaten with kutah [a dish made of sour milk, bread crums and salt]. Mar b. R. Ashi said: Even with salt too it is forbidden, because it is harmful to [one's] smell and in respect of 'something else' [= leprosy].' See also *Tur* OH 173 and *Shulchan Aruch* OH 173:2.

39 Ibid.

40 bChullin 105b, for example: 'Abaye also said: At first I thought the reason why one does not sit under a drain pipe was that there was waste water there, but my Master has told me. It is because demons are to be found there'.

Another Rabbinic ruling, based on the Second Temple system of purity rules in which liquids are considered to spread impurity,[41] is the stipulation that hands should be washed before eating something that was 'dipped in liquid'. The idea is that the food that has been dipped into a liquid or that has been in contact with liquids (and is still wet), will transfer impurities to other recipients.[42] This ruling applies to seven liquids: wine, blood, oil, milk, dew, honey, and water.[43]

The fact that many washings are related to food and a (bread-) meal may also be connected to a process of spiritualization of the act of eating itself, as some Rabbinic texts suggest. This process almost seems to turn the eating of food in the right spiritual context into a sacred ritual.[44]

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41 See bPesachim 16a: 'R. Meir [is consistent] with his view, for he maintains: The uncleanness of liquids in respect of defiling others is [only] Rabbinical; while R. Jose [is consistent] with his view, for he maintains: The uncleanness of liquids in respect of defiling others is Scriptural …', and further.

42 Based on Lev 11:38.

43 The impurity of liquids is discussed already in 4QMMT B 55–58, see also mYadayim (Hands) 4:7 for the discussion between the Sadducees and Pharisees on the apparently related subject of the impurity of liquids. See also mTerumah (heave offering/gift to the priests) 11:2: '… seven liquids make things susceptible to defilement, whereas all other liquids are not susceptible', and many other mishnayot in the tractates of Parah ([Red] Cow), Taharot (Pure Vessels/Foods), Kelim (Utensils) and Makshirin (susceptible to impurity). See also bPesachim 115a–b: 'R. Eleazar said in R. Oshaia's name: Whatever is dipped in a liquid requires the washing of the hands … If he washed his hands at the first dipping, he must wash his hands at the second dipping [too].' See also *Shulchan Aruch* OH 158:4.

44 See mAvot (Fathers) 3:3: 'Rabbi Simeon said: If three have eaten at one table and have not spoken thereat words of Torah, [it is] as if they had eaten sacrifices [offered] to the dead, for [of such persons] it is said "For all tables are full of filthy vomit [they are] without the All-present". But if three have eaten at one table and have spoken thereat words of Torah [it is] as if they had eaten at the table of the Allpresent, Blessed be He, as it is said: "This is the table before the Lord." ' And bBerachot 64b: 'Rabbi Abin the Levite also said: If one partakes of a meal at which a scholar is present, it is as if he feasted on the effulgence of the Divine Presence, since it says [Exod 18:12], "And Aaron came and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God." Was it before God that they ate? Did not they eat before Moses? This tells you, however, that if one partakes of a meal at which a scholar is present, it is as if he feasted on the effulgence of the Divine Presence [the Shekhina].' See also Exod 24:11 ('they saw God, and did eat and drink', KJV) and Rabbinic exegesis on this verse.

6 Bloodletting, Cutting Hair and Nails

bPesachim 112a says:

> He who lets blood without washing his hands will be afraid seven days. He who trims his hair and does not wash his hands will be afraid three days. He who pares his nails and does not wash his hands will be afraid one day without knowing what affrights him.

After doing one of these three things, a washing of the hands seems highly recommended. This text features amid a longer section in the Talmud Pesachim 110–113b about all kinds of potentially dangerous or harmful situations that point to a demonic-magical sphere in which shadows, demons, evil spirits, astrology, and magic play a role. This short text on bloodletting, cutting hair and fingernails is immediately followed by warnings about other dangerous behaviours that are connected to evil spirits. This suggests that the reason for washing hands after these three activities is because of possible demonical influences:

> [Putting] one's hand to one's nostrils is a step to fear; [putting] one's hand to one's forehead is a step to sleep. It was taught: If food and drink [are kept] under the bed, even if they are covered in iron vessels, an evil spirit rests upon them. Our Rabbis taught: A man must not drink water either on the nights of the fourth days [Wednesdays] or on the nights of Sabbath, and if he does drink, his blood is on his own head, because of the danger. What is the danger? An evil spirit (…)[45]

The washing of hands after bloodletting is codified in *Shulchan Aruch* OH 4:19, but not in Maimonides' codex or the *Tur*.

7 Additional Washings in Medieval Sources

In the Middle Ages, Rabbinic literature prescribes additional washings after certain situations. The *Orchot Chayim* by Aaron HaCohen from Lunil, his *Sefer Hakolbo*, *Sefer Hatashbatz* (the Katan version)[46] and the commentaries of the *Mordechai* on *Berachot* added the following situations that require the washing of hands:

45 bPesachim 112a.

46 *Orchot Chayim* = Paths of Life, Kol Bo literally means Everything is [found] in it, since it is

– after having visited the bathhouse for a washing;
– after leaving a toilet even when only entering its enclosure (see above);
– after taking off one's shoes;
– after touching one's foot;
– after washing one's hair on the head;
– after touching a corpse;
– after lousing one's clothes;
– after coming from a house of mourners;
– after walking in a cemetery ('walking between the dead');
– after touching one's member.

These medieval sources influenced later codifications of Rabbinic law. Karo's *Shulchan Aruch*[47] of the 16th century (OH 4:18)[48] has a list of situations that require the washing of hands that has many similarities to these earlier medieval sources, but there are also a number of differences: after rising from one's bed (apparently after sleeping?), after leaving a toilet or a bathhouse, cutting one's nails, after taking off shoes or touching one's feet, and after washing the hair on one's head. To this list of seven he adds other situations that require the washing of hands, based on other, unnamed authorities ('Some say also …'):

– after walking on a cemetery;
– after touching a corpse;
– after lousing one's clothes or touching a louse;
– after sexual intercourse;
– after touching one's own body (in sweaty places, usually covered with clothes).

8 A Discourse of Threats and Markers of Identity

Medieval and late Rabbinic texts show an expansion of the ritual washing of hands in different situations that are not mentioned in Talmudic law. How can this expansion be explained? Interestingly, the following strong admonition is added in the *Shulchhan Aruch* regarding the washing of hands:

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a collection of Jewish ritual, laws, and customs. *Sefer Hatashbatz* = acronym for Teshuvot Shimon ben Zemach—the Responsa of Rabbi Shimon Ben Zemach [Duran].

47 An English translation of *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim* is *Mishnah Berurah: the classic commentary to Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim, comprising the laws of daily Jewish conduct* [with a commentary by Yisroel Meir ha-Cohen] (Jerusalem 1980).

48 He refers to another source attributed to Rabbi Jitschak Aboab in his *Beth Josef* commentary on the *Tur*, although without mentioning the title of the book.

> And whoever does one of these things and did not wash his hands—if he is a scholar he will forget his knowledge, and if he is not a scholar he will become insane.[49]

This threat is not an isolated case, but fits into a wider phenomenon of a discourse of threats in relation to handwashing on different occasions. Jordan Rosenblum has shown this regarding women preparing food and has pointed to Rabbinic concerns as to whether these women properly fulfil the accompanying rituals (tithing and separating challah), but also in general regarding the washing of hands before a meal (First Waters) and after a meal (Last Waters). Rosenblum connects this with the consolidation of (group) identity and believes handwashing has a constitutive role in Rabbinic Judaism with regard to gender (male authority), the social distinction of the Rabbinic class from the illiterate masses, and the confirmation of Rabbinic authority.[50]

In my PhD thesis I have shown how a discourse of threats, dangers, and compulsions is also visible in orthodox Rabbinic responsa from 1945–2000 on the washing of hands because of the Ruakh Ra'ah—the evil spirit. In this case too, the washing of hands on account of the Ruakh Ra'ah functions as an identity marker which enables orthodox Jews to distinguish themselves from secular Jews, the ignorant, non-Jews, and sinners. Gender and authority issues play an important role too.[51] Therefore, the washing of hands is an important ritual that functions as an identity marker that can be used to draw boundaries vis-à-vis an in-group (women, non-Rabbinic Jews, sinners) or an out-group (non-Jews, pagans/*goyim*).

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49 OH 4:18.

50 See Jordan D. Rosenblum, *Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism* (New York 2010), 113–114 and his 'The Unwashed Masses: Handwashing as a Ritual of Social Distinction in Rabbinic Judaism' (draft), see note 31.

51 L. Mock, *The concept of 'Ruakh Ra'ah' in post-1945 Rabbinic responsa literature: a case study of the relation between knowledge of the physical world and traditional knowledge* (Dutch, PhD thesis Tilburg University 2015); for identity and handwashing see esp. ch. 7. An English version of the dissertation is in preparation and will be published soon.

9 Conclusion

In this article I have described the different situations that require the washing of hands in Rabbinic Judaism. Although most of the washings are connected in the Talmud to eating a meal and to praying in the context of purity and holiness, some other situations are described that do not fit into this scheme, such as washing after rising in the morning, bloodletting, nail clipping and a haircut. These seem to be the result of views on perceived magical-demonical dangers to body and mind that arise from certain activities that are connected to the body.

In the Middle Ages, new washings were added to the Talmudic ones, or these were further expanded, and even codified, especially in the *Shulchan Aruch* (16th century) and later Rabbinic texts. These new washings are also connected among other things to the body and bodily functions: visiting a toilet or bathhouse, touching a corpse, sexual intercourse. These medieval additional washings perhaps reflect an increased fear of demonic danger (Ruakh Ra'ah), mingled with renewed concerns with biblical impurities through contact with dead bodies, graves and sexual relations, as is reported in other cases connected to menstrual purity in medieval Europe.[52] A possible additional motive for washing hands in a later medieval context is a raised awareness of hygiene.[53]

The threats and perceived dangers that would befall those who did not wash their hands, point—besides the innovative character of these washings and the lack of a scriptural basis—to an important identity-constituting function of these handwashings in Rabbinical Judaism through the ages.[54] This mechanism may explain why the washing of hands abounded in post-70 Rabbinic Judaism, but not in Second Temple Judaism, while the washing of hands was not important in emerging Christianity, or was even unwanted as a sign of commitment to the Old Testament and its purity rituals. This is relevant especially in the wake of the discussions between Jesus and the Pharisees on the washing of hands in connection with food (Mark 7:1–23; Matt 15:1–20; Matt 23:25), the Pauline discussions on salvation through adherence to the Law, and

52 J.R. Woolf, 'Medieval Models of Purity and Sanctity: Ashkenazic Women in the Synagogue', in M. Poorthuis and J. Schwartz (eds), *Purity and Holiness: The Heritage of Leviticus*, Jewish and Christian Perspectives 2 (Leiden 2000), 263–280.

53 The *Orchot Chayim*, Laws on the Washing of the hands, subpar. 10, states on the additional washings that these are made with regard to hygiene and cleanness (*nikayon*). The *Mordechai* on Ch. 8 of bBerachot, par. 194, seems to suggest the same—referring to the case where someone does not have water to wash his hands.

54 For food regulations and rituals and Jewish identity see Kraemer, *Jewish Eating* (n. 37).

some antinomistic tendencies in the New Testament that are specifically connected to purity in biblical (Acts 10:10–16) and post-biblical contexts. Although the notion of purity itself continued to be a factor of importance in the discourse of Christianity in late antiquity,[55] the contrast between emphasis on handwashing in Judaism versus a critique of this ritual in the earliest Christian sources resonates with the stress placed on this ritual in both medieval and contemporary Jewish traditions—a stress which is best explained in terms of the demarcation of religious boundaries and identity.

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CHAPTER 13

From Justinian I to Mehmed II: Transformation and Continuity of Rituals and Liturgical Disposition in Hagia Sophia

Mariëtte Verhoeven

After the so-called Theodosian Hagia Sophia had been burnt to the ground during the Nika riot of 532, the Emperor Justinian I ordered the construction of a building that was unique in plan, dimensions, spatial complexity and decoration. The new Hagia Sophia or Great Church was dedicated on 27 December 537 after a building period of 5 years. It remained the cathedral of Byzantine Constantinople until 1453 but underwent many transformations during that period. Through the ages, parts of the building collapsed and had to be rebuilt or reinforced as a result of construction problems and earthquakes. Parts of the furnishings and decoration also changed, for example after the period of iconoclasm in the eighth and ninth centuries.[1]

Two periods in the history of Hagia Sophia are regarded as major breaks with its Byzantine origins and past: the appropriation and transformation of the church by the Crusaders in 1204, and by the Ottoman Turks in 1453. On these occasions the Byzantine rite was replaced by that of the Latins and of Islam respectively. Instead of focusing on the break caused by both events, in this contribution I will consider '1204' and '1453' from the perspective of con-

1 Of the numerous publications on Hagia Sophia, and apart from the specific references in this article, I limit myself here to mentioning the most important monographs, in order of appearance: W.R. Lethaby and H. Swainson, *The Church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople* (London 1894); E.H. Swift, *Hagia Sophia* (New York 1940); R.L. Van Nice, *St. Sophia in Istanbul: An Architectural Survey*, 2 vols (Washington D.C. 1965, 1980); R.J. Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia: Architecture, Structure and Liturgy of Justinian's Great Church* (London 1988); R. Mark and A. Çakmak (eds), *Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present* (Cambridge 1992); R.S. Nelson, *Hagia Sophia, 1850–1950. Holy Wisdom Modern Monument* (Chicago and London 2004); A. Guiglia Guidobaldi and C. Barsanti (eds), *Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli: l'arredo marmoreo della grande Chiesa giustinianea* (Rome 2004); N. Schibille, *Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Aesthetic Experience* (Farnham 2014); B.V. Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia: Sound, Space and Spirit in Byzantium* (Pennsylvania 2017); N.B. Teteriatnikov, *Justinianic Mosaics of Hagia Sophia and Their Aftermath* (Washington D.C. 2017); K. Dark and J. Kostenec, *Hagia Sophia in Context: an Archaeological Re-examination of the Cathedral of Byzantine Constantinople* (Barnsley 2019).

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tinuity of religious use. I will try to answer the question how both the Latin Crusaders and the Islamic Ottoman Turks took a church that was built to house the Byzantine rite into use for their own religion. To place this adaption into perspective I will briefly describe the liturgical disposition and liturgy of the Byzantine church. First, however, I will try to sketch the most important characteristics of the building that in its core is still Justinian's structure, the building that surpassed the other churches of Constantinople in every possible way (Fig. 13.1).

1 Form, Liturgical Disposition and Liturgy of Justinian's Church

The plan of Hagia Sophia (Fig. 13.2) is a combination of a rectangular basilica, consisting of a nave flanked by aisles and galleries, and a centralized building.[2] A huge rectangle measuring 71 by 77 m, the core of the building consists of a central square of 31 by 31 m from which the main dome rises, resting on four arches. The arches are supported by piers and are connected by pendentives. The spatial complexity is enhanced by the fact that the arches to the north and south are incorporated in the side walls of the nave, just like the huge piers are embedded in the aisles. As a result, for the beholder standing in the nave it is not immediately clear what forces carry the enormous dome. Procopius describes this effect as follows: 'Yet it [the dome] seems not to rest upon solid masonry, but to cover the space with its golden dome suspended from Heaven.'[3] However, the first dome as described by Procopius collapsed in 558. It was replaced by a steeper dome, rising to about 14.5 m above the level of the cornice and 56 m above floor level, which was completed in 562.[4]

2 For the most adequate and evocative description of the architecture of Hagia Sophia see R. Krautheimer and Slobodan Ćurčić, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (New Haven and London 1986[4]), 205–219.

3 Procopius, *De aedificiis* in J. Haury (ed.) and G. Wirth (rev.), *Procopii Caesariensis opera omnia*, vol. 4 (Leipzig 1964), I.1.46–47; transl. in English, H.B. Dewing and G. Downey, *Procopius*, vol. VII, Buildings (London and Cambridge 1961[3]), 21.

4 Attested by the contemporary accounts by Agathius and Malalas. The latter mentions that the new dome was made 20 Byzantine feet (c. 6.25 m) higher than the original one. Agathias, *Historiarum libri quinque*, ed. R. Keydell (Berlin 1967); transl. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453. Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1972), 78. For Malalas see J. Thurn (ed.), *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae (Berlin—New York 2000); transl. Mango, *The Art*, 79. See also Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia*, 90–91, 126–127, 209–212, 217.

The effect of the invisibility of the carrying elements was reinforced by the decoration of the building. The huge piers were covered with slabs of various types and colours of marble, creating the illusion that they were almost insubstantial. The same is true for the domes and vaults, which were decorated with mainly golden, non-figural mosaics.[5] The floor, consisting of slabs of Proconnesian marble, is compared with the sea in certain sources. In his *Ekphrasis*, the poem he performed soon after the rededication of the church on 24 December 562, Paulus Silentarius describes the ambo as an island that rises 'amidst the waves of the sea' (see also below).[6] The ninth-century *Diegesis peri tes Hagias Sofias*, the narration of the construction of Hagia Sophia, mentions that 'the floor, too, was a wonder for those who entered, for by the great variety of its marbles it appeared like the sea or the constantly flowing water of a river.'[7] Procopius' reference to the dome as 'suspended from heaven' and his comparison of the floor of the church to the sea allude to the notion of the church building as a representation of the cosmos, symbolizing the hierarchy from the heavenly sphere of the dome down to the earthly zone of the lower part of the church.[8] According to Robert Taft, Hagia Sophia gave expression to this notion 'in a way never achieved before.'[9]

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5 Teteriatnikov, *Justinianic Mosaics*.

6 Paulus Silentarius, *Descriptio ecclesiae sanctae Sophiae et ambonis*. Edition with commentary in German: Paul Friedländer, *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentarius* (Leipzig and Berlin 1969^2), 225–304, here 263, line 224; transl. of excerpts in Mango, *The Art*, 80–96, here 95. The exact date of the performance(s) of the poem is still debated.

7 *Diegesis peri tes Hagias Sofias*, T. Preger (ed.), *Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitanarum* (Leipzig 1902), vol. 1, 74–108; transl. in French by G. Dagron, *Constantinople imaginaire: Études sur le recueil des Patria* (Paris 1984), 191–314. I have used the transl. in English by Albrecht Berger, *Accounts of Medieval Constantinople. The Patria* (Cambridge etc. 2013), 229–279, here 265. On marble floors and the metaphor of water: F. Barry, 'Walking on Water: Cosmic Floors in Antiquity and the Middle Ages', *Art Bulletin* 89.4 (2007), 627–656. See also Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia*, 122–131.

8 R. Taft, 'The Liturgy of the Great Church: An Initial Synthesis of Structure and Interpretation on the Eve of Iconoclasm', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34/35 (1980/1981), 45–75, here 47 and n. 16. According to Taft this notion was first systemized in Christian literature by Maximus in his *Mystagogia* and applied to a Christian church in a sixth-century poem on the cathedral of Edessa (transl. of this poem in Mango, *The Art*, 57–60). See also E.M. van Opstall, 'On the Threshold. Paul the Silentiary's Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia' in E.M. van Opstall (ed.), *Sacred Thresholds. The Door to the Sanctuary in Late* Antiquity (Leiden 2018), 31–65, here 35–36. See for the notion of cosmos in relation to middle Byzantine churches O. Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium* (Boston 1955^2), 15.

9 Taft, 'The Liturgy', 47.

In addition to the architectural form and decoration, light and lighting also reinforced the notion of the building as the cosmos.[10] According to Procopius 'one might say that its interior is not illuminated from without by the sun, but that the radiance comes into being within it, such an abundance of light bathes this shrine.'[11] Paulus Silentarius describes the illumination of the building in the evening: 'you might say that some nocturnal sun filled the majestic temple with light.'[12]

Those who entered Hagia Sophia for a liturgical ceremony in the sixth century must indeed have felt that they were entering heaven on earth.[13] The 'holy of holies' was the sanctuary or bema.[14] It was separated from the nave by a chancel screen and access to this sacred space where the Eucharist was celebrated was restricted to the clergy.[15] The liturgical furnishings of the sanctuary in Justinian's church are described by Paulus Silentarius (Fig. 13.3). First of all he mentions the *synthronon* in the apse: 'the priestly seats and steps ranged in a circle', of which the topmost tier, including the throne of the patriarch, were covered in silver.[16] Then he successively names and describes the chancel screen, ciborium and altar.[17] The chancel screen had twelve columns with parapets between them and three doors, each on one side of the screen that projected into the nave. It was 'all fenced under a cover of silver'.[18] Set behind the chancel screen 'and on columns of gold is raised the all-gold slab of the

10 On the effect of light see N. Schibille, *Hagia Sophia*. For the role of sound and acoustics in the creation of sacred space see Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia*.

11 Procopius, *De aedificiis*, I.1.30–31; transl. Dewing and Downey, 17.

12 Paulus Silentarius, *Descriptio ecclesiae*, 250, lines 807–809; transl. Mango, *The Art*, 89.

13 On the equation of church and heaven see Van Opstall, 'On the Threshold', 36.

14 The sanctuary as the holy of holies is modelled upon the Holy of Holies of the Old Testament Jerusalem Temple, but with a different liturgical practice (Eucharist versus animal sacrifices), see, most recently, 'General Introduction' in Van Opstall, *Sacred Thresholds*, 1–27, here 3. *Idem*, 8, for a brief discussion of the Veil of the Jerusalem temple as model for the curtain at the door to Byzantine sanctuaries, with Hagia Sophia as the most striking example.

15 S. de Blaauw, 'Origins and Early Developments of the Choir' in S. Frommel and L. Lecomte (eds), *La place du choeur. Architecture et liturgie du Moyen Âge aux Temps modernes* (Paris and Rome 2012), 11–18, here 12, mentions that one of the earliest descriptions of a chancel enclosure in a church and of the chancel itself as the 'Holy of Holies' is that of the cathedral of Tyre by bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (beginning 4th C.), with quotation in English.

16 Paulus Silentarius, *Descriptio ecclesiae*, 237, lines 362–368; transl. Mango, *The Art*, 81.

17 Paulus Silentarius, *Descriptio ecclesiae*, chancel screen: 246–247, lines 682–719 and 251–252, lines 871–883, ciborium: 247–248, lines 720–751, altar: 248–249, lines 752–780.

18 Transl. Mango, *The Art*, 87.

holy table, standing on gold foundations, and bright with the glitter of precious stones'.[19] The ciborium that rose above the altar is described as

> an indescribable tower, reared on fourfold arches of silver. It is borne aloft on silver columns on whose tops each of the four arches has planted its silver feet. And above the arches springs up a figure like a cone (…).[20]

Silentarius dedicates a separate section of his poem to the description of the ambo and solea.[21] The ambo, a raised platform with stairs on the east and west side, stood in front of the chancel screen, near the centre of the nave underneath the dome. According to Silentarius the platform consisted of an oval shaped, single slab of stone supported by eight columns. The parapets that bounded the platform and the stairs were sheathed in silver. The ambo was surrounded by two semi-circular open screens, each with four columns with gilded capitals. Crosses and lamps stood on the architrave on top of the columns. The open screens that surrounded the ambo stood on a raised plinth that continued eastward as the solea, a raised walkway to the chancel screen. Silentarius compared the ambo with an island that rises from the sea and the solea with an isthmus:

> And as an island rises amidst the waves of the sea (…) so in the midst of the temple rises upright the tower-like ambo of stone (…) Yet, it does not stand altogether cut off in the central space, like a sea-girt island (…) Projecting into the watery deep, it is still joined to the mainland coast by the isthmus, as by a cable.[22]

The liturgical furnishings that Silentarius describes differed only in their greater size and magnificence from those in contemporary churches in Constantinople.[23] In addition to these fixed elements, which occupied a part of the nave and the sanctuary, the enormous space was filled by the clergy and the congregation involved in the performance of liturgical ritual. Hagia Sophia also surpassed all other churches in the city in the number of people who could attend a service; the central space of the nave alone could accommodate roughly 16,000 people.[24]

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19 Idem, 88.
20 Ibid.
21 Paulus Silentarius, *Descriptio ambonis*, 258–265, lines 50–296.
22 Paulus Silentarius, *Descriptio ambonis*, 263, lines 224–239; transl. Mango, *The Art*, 95.
23 Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia*, 226.
24 Pentcheva, *Hagia Sophia*, 3.

Reconstruction of the shape of the Byzantine rite in the sixth century is problematic because of the absence of contemporary sources.[25] The liturgical books all date from the post-iconoclastic period, that is from after 800, and the earliest so-called commentary on the Byzantine liturgy is Maximus the Confessor's *Mystagogia*, composed around 630.[26] There is no textual or archaeological evidence that the development of the Byzantine rite changed radically with the building of Justinian's church.[27] What we know is that the early Byzantine rite was characterized by the movement of processions to and within the church. Hagia Sophia, being the patriarchal cathedral as well as the church where the emperor participated in the liturgy, played an important role in the system of stational liturgy.[28] Most of the designated feast days included the celebration of the Eucharist in Hagia Sophia, preceded by a procession to the church. Within the church the celebration of the liturgy involved the processions connected with the so-called First and Great Entrance. Because of the dimensions of Hagia Sophia, the liturgical processions would have taken more time and would have included the participation of more people than in other churches. The First Entrance started with the procession into the church followed by the liturgy of the Word, including readings from the ambo from the Old Testament, the Acts or the Epistles, and the Gospel. For the latter, the Gospel book was carried by the deacon from the altar, down the solea, to the ambo and back again. The offertory procession, before which the catechumens were dismissed, was called the Great Entrance. The Eucharistic gifts were transferred for this from the *skeuophylakion*, the sacristy, to the main altar, followed by the consecration of the gifts and communion. The liturgy also concluded with processions, of the clergy back to the *skeuophylakion* and of the clergy and congregation out of the church. Most of the ritual took place in the sanctuary, the place reserved for the patriarch and the rest of the clergy. On the occasions that the emperor participated in the liturgy he remained for most of the service on his throne in the *metatorion*, which was probably located in the south aisle of the church.[29]

25 For a reconstruction of the Early Byzantine liturgy see T.F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park, PA and London 1971), 105–176. For liturgy in the sixth century and Hagia Sophia specifically see Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia*, 226–235.

26 Mathews, *Early Churches*, 112–114.

27 Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia*, 227.

28 On stational and processional liturgy in Constantinople see J.F. Baldovin, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship. The Origins, Development, and Meaning of Stational Liturgy* (Rome 1987), 167–226.

29 For the location of the imperial *metatorion* and throne see Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia*, 223–226.

2 Hagia Sophia as the Cathedral of the Latin Kingdom of Constantinople (1204–1261)

A coalition of Western Crusaders, mainly from Venice and France, conquered Constantinople in 1204 and founded the Latin Kingdom of Constantinople, which existed until 1261. The period of the Latin occupation is considered to be the first major break in the history of the Byzantine Empire during which the city was seriously damaged and looted. The words of Doğan Kuban in his urban history of Istanbul provide a good example of this point of view:

> The Crusaders destroyed Constantinople. All the monuments embellishing the public places, the porticoes, the Hippodrome were pillaged. The Latins did not build anything in the city. They simply converted some Byzantine churches for the practice of the Catholic rites.[30]

The predominant narrative that the Crusaders only damaged the city finds confirmation in the Byzantine sources and in the fact that objects taken from Constantinople can still be found in the West, especially in Venice. The Byzantine statesman and historian Niketas Choniates reports how the Crusaders desecrated the Great Church:

> The table of sacrifice, fashioned from every kind of precious material and fused by fire into one whole (…) was broken into pieces and divided among the despoilers, as was the lot of all the sacred church treasures, countless in number and unsurpassed in beauty. (…) In addition, in order to remove the pure silver which overlay the railing of the bema, the wondrous pulpit and the gates, as well as that which covered a great many other adornments, all of which were plated with gold, they led to the very sanctuary of the temple itself mules and asses with packsaddles (…)[31]

Robert of Clari, a French knight and participant in the Fourth Crusade, gives a completely different picture. In his eyewitness account Robert marvels at the riches of the interior of Hagia Sophia and describes the main altar, 'made of gold and precious stones', and the silver ciborium that 'was so rich that no one could tell the money it was worth.'[32] He also narrates the coronation of Bald-

30 D. Kuban, *Istanbul an Urban History. Byzantion, Constantinoplis, Istanbul* (Istanbul 2010). Kuban dedicates only five out of almost 600 pages to the Latin occupation of the city.

31 *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*, transl. H.J. Magoulias (Detroit 1984), 315.

32 Robert of Clari. *The Conquest of Constantinople*, transl. E.H. McNeal (Toronto 1996), 106.

win of Flanders as the first Latin emperor of Constantinople in 1204. Robert depicts how Baldwin was brought from his palace to Hagia Sophia, where he was solemnly dressed for the coronation ritual:

> When he was thus vested and the two bishops were holding the crown on the altar, then all the bishops went and took hold of the crown all together and blessed it and made the sign of the cross on it and put it on his head. And then to serve as a clasp they hung about his neck a very rich jewel which the emperor Michael had once bought for sixty-two thousand marks. When they had crowned him, they seated him on a high throne, and he was there while the mass was sung, and he held in one hand his scepter and in the other hand a golden globe with a cross on it. And the jewels which he was wearing were worth more than the treasure of a rich king would make. When the mass was heard, they brought him a white horse on which he mounted. Then the barons took him back to his palace of Boukoleon and seated him on a throne of Constantine, they all did homage to him as emperor and all the Greeks who were there bowed before him as the sacred emperor.[33]

As the French had elected Baldwin of Flanders as the Latin emperor, the Venetians could choose their fellow countryman Tommaso Morisini as the first Latin patriarch of Constantinople and Venetian canons were appointed to Hagia Sophia.[34] The prohibition of the use of the Byzantine liturgy in Constantinople by Morisini in 1206 defined the end of a tradition that had begun with the foundation of the city by the Emperor Constantine in 330.[35] However, the occupation of Constantinople by the Crusaders was at the same time marked by aspects of continuity.[36] The Crusaders stayed in the city for almost sixty years and took at least twenty Byzantine churches and a dozen monasteries into use

33 Robert of Clari, 116–117.

34 K.M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571) Vol. I, The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Philadelphia 1976), 14; Thomas F. Madden, 'The Venetian Version of the Fourth Crusade: Memory and the Conquest of Constantinople in Medieval Venice', *Speculum* 87.2 (April 2012), 311–344, here 333–334.

35 C.A. Frazee, 'The Catholic Church in Constantinople, 1204–1453', *Balkan Studies* 3 (1976), 33–49, here 35.

36 In modern literature there has been little attention for aspects of continuity that accompanied the Latin occupation of the Byzantine capital. An exception is the excellent article by D. Jacoby, 'The Urban Evolution of Latin Constantinople (1204–1261)', in N. Necipoğlu (ed.), *Byzantine Constantinople: monuments, topography and everyday life* (Leiden 2001), 277–297.

for the Latin rite.[37] Hagia Sophia became the Latin cathedral and the eyewitness account by Robert of Clari shows that if the Crusaders indeed damaged and destroyed the liturgical furnishings of Hagia Sophia, as Niketas Choniates describes, they apparently did not do so immediately after the conquest of the city. And if indeed they, again according to Choniates, desecrated the church, this situation was restored for the ceremony and mass for the coronation of Baldwin of Flanders on 16 May 1204, just over a month after the capture of the city. Moreover, it is clear from what Robert of Clari tells us about the coronation ceremony that the Latin rulers saw themselves as heirs to their Byzantine predecessors. Their intention to stay in Constantinople is apparent from evidence testifying that they also embellished and maintained Hagia Sophia. Latin mass was celebrated in the church at an altar that was decorated with marble columns taken from the church of the Anastasis monastery by Patriarch Morosini.[38] Alice-Mary Talbot suggests that the Latins also enlarged the space for the clergy and may have built a new chancel screen projecting further into the nave, using material from other churches.[39] However, the chancel screen in Hagia Sophia already projected relatively far into the nave (Fig. 13.3) and there is no reason to assume that the Latin or, more precisely, the Venetian clergy outnumbered that of the Byzantines. It is also remarkable that Choniates mentions the removal of the pure silver from the chancel screen ('the railing of the bema') but not its destruction. Moreover, the form of the chancel screen in Hagia Sophia as such must have been familiar to the Venetians because it resembled that in the Venetian-Byzantine church of Torcello in the Venetian lagoon and probably that of their own cathedral San Marco.[40] It is more likely

37 R. Janin, 'Les sanctuaires de Byzance sous la domination latine, 1204–1261', *Revue des études byzantine* 2 (1944), 134–184; E. Dalleggio d'Alessio, 'Les sanctuaires urbains et sub-urbain de Byzance sous la domination latine, 1204–1261', *Revue des études byzantine* 11 (1953), 50–61.

38 Innocent III, *Epist.*, XI, 76, PL 215, 1392C: "Ab impetitione vero clericorum Sanctae Anastasis super columnis marmoreis quas de ipsorum ecclesia ad ecclesiam Sanctae Sophiae transtulisse diceris ad ornatum altaris, te reddimus absolutum."

39 A.-M. Talbot, 'The Restoration of Constantinople under Michael VIII', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 47 (1993), 243–261, here 247.

40 For the chancel screen of Torcello (eleventh century) see H. Belting, *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago 1996), 233. The church of San Marco in Venice was built in the second half of the eleventh century after the example of Justinian's Holy Apostles church in Constantinople. It is likely that the former had a chancel screen comparable to the current one that dates from the fourteenth century, which in its turn replaced a chancel screen from the thirteenth century. For San Marco see O. Demus, *The Church of San Marco in Venice. History, Architecture, Sculpture* (Washington, DC 1960), esp. 137–138.

that the ambo and solea, which were never in use in the West in that form and disposition, were removed.[41] In any case it seems that the church was made suitable for the Latin rite without major structural intervention.

Emerson H. Swift argued convincingly with respect to the maintenance of the church that the four flying buttresses to strengthen the building at the western exterior were constructed by the Crusaders, presumably after the earthquake of 1231.[42] A belfry is depicted between the middle pair of these buttresses on a drawing by Grelot dated 1680 (Fig. 13.4). According to the Russian pilgrim Antony of Novgorod, there were no bells in Hagia Sophia in 1200, so it may have been added by the Crusaders.[43] The supposition that the Crusaders built the belfry is supported by the fact that it is depicted on Grelot's drawing as a Romanesque tower and, moreover, bell ringing was a Western and not an Eastern religious practice. According to the French nobleman Geoffroy de Villehardouin, the Venetian leader of the Fourth Crusade, the doge Enrico Dandolo, was buried with great honour in Hagia Sophia.[44] The church had not been used for burial by the Byzantines—from Constantine on Byzantine emperors were buried in the complex of the Holy Apostles' church—so Dandolo's burial in Hagia Sophia was more a deed of appropriation than a testimony of continuity. Villehardouin does not mention the location and appearance of Dandolo's grave. Thomas Dale hypothesized that the memorial stone with the inscription 'Henricus Dandolo' that is placed in the floor of the central bay of the southern gallery of Hagia Sophia faithfully records an oral tradition of the lost tomb's original location. He believes the Venetians placed the tomb in a funerary oratory of which the Deesis mosaic (see below) against the wall opposite the memorial stone was also part.[45] The central and eastern bays of the gallery are separated from the rest of the gallery by a marble screen (Fig. 13.5). This is not mentioned by Procopius or Silentarius, but it probably dates from the sixth

41 For a comparison of the development of the chancel disposition in East and West see De Blaauw, 'Origins'.

42 E.H. Swift, 'The Latins at Hagia Sophia', *American Journal of Archaeology* 39, no. 4 (1935), 458–474. According to Rowland J. Mainstone the most likely date for these buttresses is in the ninth or tenth century: Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia*, 104.

43 Swift, 'Latins', 462. On the adoption of bell ringing in Byzantium before 1204 see A. Rodriguez Suarez, 'The Sebastokrator Isaac Komnenos: Manuel I's Latinophile Uncle?', in D. Slootjes and M. Verhoeven (eds), *Byzantium in Dialogue with the Mediterranean. History and Heritage* (Leiden 2019), 182–202, here 189–193.

44 Geoffroy de Villehardouin, *La conquête de Constantinople*. Ed. and transl. E. Faral, Vol. II (1203–1207) (Paris 1939), 199.

45 T. Dale, paper abstract for the Twenty-First Annual Byzantine Studies Conference at the New York University and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1995), published at http://www.bsana.net/conference/archives/1995/abstracts_1995.html.

century.[46] The separated space that was created by the screen was used by the emperor and the clergy, who had direct access to it from outside for a variety of liturgical and ceremonial practices. It may well have been that this space was occupied during the Latin occupation by the Venetian patriarch and his clergy. Although it is very unlikely that the original grave of the doge Enrico Dandolo would have been in the floor of the gallery, the probably nineteenth-century memorial stone is the only clear material reference to the use and possession of the church by the Crusaders in the thirteenth century.[47]

3 Hagia Sophia in the Late Byzantine Period (1261–1453)

'When Michael VIII entered Constantinople in 1261 he had to face the reality that the capital was a desolate, depopulated city that was only a shadow of its former glory.'[48] This is how Alice-Mary Talbot, in her excellent article on the restoration of Constantinople under the Emperor Michael VIII, describes the state of the city after the Latin occupation. Talbot cites the words of Nicephorus Gregoras to illustrate her statement:

> the Queen of Cities was a plain of desolation, full of ruins (…), with houses razed to the ground, and a few [buildings] which had survived the great fire. For raging fire had blackened its beauty and ornamentation on several occasions when the Latins were first trying to enslave [the City].[49]

Gregoras, however, was not an eyewitness, as he was born in 1295 and came to Constantinople in 1315, more than fifty years after the emperor had recaptured the city.[50] By the time Gregoras saw Constantinople, the city had already been restored by Michael VIII.

Even though the image of complete destruction and depopulation should be nuanced, it is clear that Michael VIII had to reappropriate a city that had been

46 Mainstone, *Hagia Sophia*, 225.

47 For the history of both Dandolo's original grave and his memorial stone, see M. Verhoeven, 'Een Venetiaanse doge in de Hagia Sophia', in M. Ilsink et al. (eds), *Het einde van de middeleeuwen. Vijftig kunstwerken uit de tijd van Bosch en Erasmus* (Nijmegen 2019), 263–268.

48 Talbot, 'The Restoration', 249.

49 *Ibidem*. Text in Greek and Latin in L. Schopen and I. Bekker (eds), *Nicephori Gregorae byzantina historia*, 3 vols (Bonn 1829–55), I, 87.23–88.5.

50 J. van Dieten, *Entstehung und Überlieferung der Historia Rhomaike des Nikephoros Gregoras* (diss. Cologne 1975), 1.

in decline. One of his considerations was the recovery of the churches that had been lost to the Latins. With regard to Hagia Sophia this involved firstly the preparation of Michael's coronation in autumn 1261, some three months after his triumphal entry on 15 August 1261. According to George Pachymeres, who, unlike Gregoras, was an eyewitness, the emperor Michael

> restored to its previous condition the entire church [of Hagia Sophia] which had been altered by the Italians in many aspects. And placing in charge the monk Rouchas (…) he rearranged the bema, ambo and solea, and reconstructed other parts of [Hagia Sophia] with imperial funds. Then he restored the holy sanctuary to a more glorious state with [gifts of] sacred textiles and vessels.[51]

Pachymeres' account confirms that the most important intervention made by the Latins at Hagia Sophia had been the removal or replacement of liturgical furnishings, sacred vessels and other precious objects and that that situation could be relatively easily restored in order to use the church for the coronation of Michael VIII and the Byzantine rite.

We do not know which other parts of the church Michael VIII restored, but there is no evidence that the figural mosaics in the interior of Hagia Sophia were damaged or destroyed during the Crusader period. As mentioned in the introduction, Justinian's church had mainly golden, non-figural mosaics. It was only after the period of iconoclasm that the building was decorated with monumental figural mosaics, the first of which was that of Mary Theotokos in the apse. This metre-high image, which immediately caught the eye of visitors who entered the church through the central doors, enhanced the longitudinal direction of the building. The last mosaic that was added was the monumental Deesis panel on the wall of the central bay of the south gallery. The dating of this mosaic varies from the late eleventh to the thirteenth century. Given the style, a date after 1261 seems the most probable, but I agree with Talbot that it is unlikely that a mosaic panel of that size and quality could have been created for the occasion of the coronation of Michael VIII just three months after his arrival in the city in August 1261.[52]

As a result of damage caused by severe earthquakes in 1343–1344, the eastern arch and one third of the dome of Hagia Sophia collapsed in May 1346. The

51 Talbot, 'The Restoration', 274 and 251. Text in Greek and French in A. Failler (ed.) and V. Laurent (transl.), *Georges Pachymérès. Relations historiques* (Paris 1984), I, 233.8–13.

52 Talbot, 'The Restoration', 252 and n. 63.

repair of the building was completed in 1354, but only after reception of a donation by Symeon, the grand duke of Moscow, and a public collection of money.[53]

In the last century of the Byzantine Empire, the fate of Hagia Sophia went hand in hand with that of Constantinople. By the middle of the fifteenth century Hagia Sophia was a church in a state of neglect and disrepair in a depopulated city that suffered from natural disasters, civil wars and attacks by, among others, the Venetians, the Genoese, and the Turks.[54] In February 1438, the Emperor John VIII and his retinue arrived in Venice for the occasion of the Council of Ferrara-Florence, to negotiate the reunion of the Western and Eastern churches.[55] The Byzantine delegates were shown the treasures of the church of San Marco. One of them, Sylvester Syropolous, a deacon of Hagia Sophia, gives a revealing account of the visit:

> We also looked at the divine icons from what is called the holy templon (…).[56] These objects were brought here according to the law of booty right after the conquest of our city by the Latins, and were reunited in the form of a very large icon on top of the altar of the main choir.[57] (…) We were told that these icons came from the templon of the most holy Great Church. However, we knew for sure, through the inscriptions and the image of the Komnenoi, that they came from the Pantocrator Monastery.[58]

Whether or not the icons came from the chancel screen of Hagia Sophia, it must have been a shock for the Byzantine delegation to be confronted with the presence of Byzantine sacred treasures from Constantinople in a Western church.

On 12 December 1452 Hagia Sophia was the setting of the official proclamation of the Union of the Latin and Orthodox churches by Isidore of Kiev.[59]

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53 J. Freely and A.S. Çakmak, *Byzantine Monuments of Istanbul* (Cambridge 2004), 96.

54 For the history of Constantinople from 1261 to 1453 see Kuban, *Istanbul*, 194–222.

55 On the Council of Ferrara-Florence see J. Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge 1959) and D.J. Geanakoplos, 'The Council of Florence (1438–39) and the Problem of Union between the Byzantine and Latin Churches' in Idem, *Constantinople and the West* (Madison, WI 1989), 224–254.

56 The *templon* is the chancel screen or iconostasis.

57 The 'very large icon on top of the altar of the main choir' is the famous altar retable Pala d'Oro.

58 As quoted in H.A. Klein, 'Refashioning Byzantium in Venice, ca. 1200–1400', in H. Maguire and R.S. Nelson (eds), *San Marco, Byzantium and the Myths of Venice* (Washington, DC 2010), 193–226, here 194 and n. 4, with references.

59 C.A. Frazee, 'The Catholic Church in Constantinople, 1204–1453', *Balkan Studies* 3 (1976), 33–49, here 45; M. Philippides and W.K. Hanak, *The Siege and the Fall of Constantinople in 1453. Historiography, Topography, and Military Studies* (Farnham 2011), 227–228.

This was the outcome of the Council of Ferrara-Florence, which had ended on 6 July 1439 with the reading in Latin and Greek of a Decree of Union in the cathedral of Florence. Since the Schism of 1054 the Western and Eastern churches had negotiated reunion on several occasions. Before Ferrara-Florence it had actually been agreed in 1274 at the Council of Lyon between Pope Gregory X and the Emperor Michael VIII. It was rejected, however, by the great majority of the clergy and people of Constantinople, who had not yet forgotten the enforced conversion to the Latin rite after the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204. The same deep-rooted hostility to the Latins was also the underlying reason for the rejection by the majority of the clergy and people of Constantinople of the Union in 1452. Apparently Hagia Sophia was the only church in Unionist hands and the anti-Unionists considered it contaminated.[60] In the early hours of the sack of Constantinople by Mehmed II in 1453, however, large crowds sought refuge in Hagia Sophia. This elicited the following words from the Byzantine chronicler and pro-Unionist Doukas:

> O miserable Romans! O wretches! The temple which only yesterday you called a cave and altar of heretics, and not one of you would enter so as not to be defiled because the liturgy was offered by clerics who had embraced Church Union, and now, because of the impending wrath you push your way inside, seeking to be saved. But not even the impending just wrath could move your hearts to peace. And even if, in such a calamity, an angel were to descend from heaven and say to you, 'If you will accept the Union and a state of peace in the Church, I will expel the enemy from the City,' even then you would not assent. And if you did assent, it would only be a lie! They who but a few days before had said, 'it would be better to fall into the hands of the Turks than into the clutches of the Franks,' knew this was true.[61]

4 Transformation into a Mosque under Mehmed II

The definite end of the Byzantine Empire was marked by the fall (from the Greek-Byzantine perspective) or the conquest (from the Ottoman-Turkish per-

60 Frazee, 'The Catholic Church', 45.

61 Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman* Turks, transl. H.J. Magoulias (Detroit 1975), 226.

spective) of Constantinople on 29 May 1453. With the capture of the city by the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II more than a thousand years of Christian history came to an end, and Islam became the dominant religion.

Mehmed II came to power in 1451 after having been sultan in Edirne for a short period as an adolescent from 1444 to 1446. There, in 1437, Mehmed's father Sultan Murad II had initiated the construction of the Üç Şerefeli Mosque, a building with a dome of twenty-four metres in diameter and fifty-three metres in height.[62] It was completed in 1447, which means that, just prior to the conquest of Constantinople, Mehmed had witnessed the construction in Edirne of the largest of all Ottoman domes to that date.

After 54 days of siege, the first and highly symbolic act of Mehmed II after the capture of Constantinople was the appropriation of Hagia Sophia, the church that had been in Unionist hands since December 1452.[63] In words that are reminiscent of Niketas Choniates' description of the desecration of Hagia Sophia by the Crusaders 350 years earlier (see above), Doukas narrates what happened after the Turks entered Hagia Sophia and after they had captured the men and women who had sought refuge there:

> What became of the temple treasures? What shall I say and how shall I say it? (…) In that same hour the dogs hacked the holy icons to pieces, removing the ornaments. As for the chains, candelabra, holy altar coverings, and lamps, some they destroyed and the rest they seized. All the precious and sacred vessels of the holy sacristy, fashioned from gold and silver and other valuable materials, they collected in an instant, leaving the temple desolate and naked; absolutely nothing was left behind.[64]

He ends his lamentation with the following words:

> Because of our sins the temple which was rebuilt in the name of the Wisdom of the Logos of God, and is called the Temple of the Holy Trinity, and Great Church and New Sion, today has become an altar of barbarians, and has become the House of Muhammad.[65]

62 G. Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture* (Oxford 1992^2), 97–100.

63 Groundbreaking for the history of Hagia Sophia after 1453: G. Necipoğlu, 'The Life of an Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium', in R. Mark and A. Çakmak (eds), *Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present* (Cambridge 1992), 195–225.

64 Doukas, *Decline and Fall*, 227.

65 *Idem*, 231–232.

Doukas is relatively positive about the sultan and describes how Mehmed proceeded to the Great Church, dismounted from his horse, and went inside. He marvelled at the sight and when he found a Turk smashing a piece of marble pavement he remarked: 'You have enough treasure and captives. The City's buildings are mine.'[66] According to Tursun Beg, whose *History of Mehmed the Conqueror* is the only contemporary source in the Ottoman language, Sultan Mehmed particularly expressed his desire to see Hagia Sophia, the church that had deteriorated to the extent that only its dome was left standing.[67] Tursun describes how the sultan is impressed by the enormous dome, the marble floor and the golden mosaics. According to Tursun the 'world emperor' climbed the dome, and having fully comprehended the significance of the building he ordered it to be repaired and transformed into his royal mosque.[68]

Hagia Sophia was not the first church to be transformed into a mosque by the Ottomans. Among the churches converted earlier in the Ottoman period were the Hagia Sophia in Nicaea (Iznik) and churches in Pergamon (Bergama) and Assos (Behremkale).[69] Apparently, there were no fundamental objections to using a church building for the Islamic worship, even though mosques as cultic spaces for Muslims function quite differently than churches do as sacred spaces for Christians. In a mosque, the wall (*qibla*) with the prayer niche (*mihrab*) simply indicates the direction of Mecca and it does not carry the same meaning as the sanctuary in a Byzantine church. As we have seen, the sanctuary was a holy space and access to it was restricted to the clergy who were involved in mystical liturgical rites of which the Eucharist was the most important. Islam, however, as a lay religion without a hierarchy, required the open, almost non-directional space of a mosque. An important intervention required to achieve this openness in churches that were converted into mosques was the removal of the chancel screen that separated the sanctuary from the nave.

Not only must Mehmed have deemed the architectural space of Hagia Sophia suitable to be used for the Islamic worship, his deed of appropriation of the most important church of Eastern Christianity also confirmed the triumph of Islam over Christendom. However, the transformation of the building into an imperial mosque involved relatively minimal changes.[70] At the exterior, the cross on the dome as well as the bells from the belfry were removed, but

66 *Idem*, 231.

67 *Tursun Beg, The History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, text in facs. with intr. and transl. in English by H. Inalcık and R. Murphey (Minneapolis and Chicago 1978), 37.

68 Necipoğlu, 'The Life', 197.

69 Goodwin, *Ottoman Architecture*, 17.

70 The paragraph on the transformation of the building into a mosque is based on Necipoğlu,

the tower itself remained standing until the seventeenth century (see Fig. 13.3). Immediately after the conquest, the belfry was possibly used temporarily to facilitate the call for prayer. Later, the southern turret flanking the great west window was heightened to serve as a minaret. The first monumental minaret, made out of brick, was built before 1481 by Mehmed II on the south-eastern buttress. Whether the north-eastern minaret was built under Mehmed or under one of his successors is not clear. The western pair was added in the sixteenth century (Fig. 13.6).[71]

Similarly to the Latin appropriation of the church, the most important change in the interior consisted of the removal of the Eastern Christian liturgical furnishings: the ambo, solea, and the altar with ciborium, but in this case also the chancel screen that separated the sanctuary from the nave. In the now open space the new Islamic furnishings included a *mihrab* (prayer niche), which was placed in the direction of Mecca in the apse, as well as a *minbar* (pulpit). A prayer rug of the Prophet Muhammad and four banners that commemorated Mehmed's conquest of Constantinople were hung beside the *mihrab*. The figural mosaics were plastered over, but those at a higher level, such as that of Mary Theotokos in the apse and Christ Pantokrator in the dome remained visible. In later centuries, all mosaics would eventually disappear beneath plaster and more visible Islamic elements would be added, such as the huge shields with Islamic calligraphy on the pillars that replaced the few unobtrusive Muslim inscriptions dating from Sultan Mehmed's period. The building also kept its name, Aya Sofia.

The physical transformation of Hagia Sophia into a mosque was supported and strengthened by myths which connected Hagia Sophia with a pre-Christian imperial past and the new Islamic context.[72] Mehmed II ordered the writing of a history that reinvented the monumental past of Constantinople and Hagia Sophia and that was based on the abovementioned Byzantine ninth-century *Diegesis*. The *Diegesis* was a popular text that is an example of 'invention of tradition'. Legends such as Justinian's exclamation 'I have defeated you, Solomon', referring to the Jerusalem Temple that he surpassed with the construction of Hagia Sophia, and the collection of spolia from across the empire

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'The Life', 203–204 and C. Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (Philadelphia 2009), 20–21.

71 On the minarets see W. Emerson and R.L. van Nice, 'Hagia Sophia and the First Minaret Erected After the Conquest of Constantinople', *American Journal of Archaeology* 54.1 (1950), 28–40; Mainstone, *Hagia* Sophia, 113; Necipoğlu, 'The Life', 206–209; Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul*, 21 and n. 17.

72 This paragraph is based on Necipoğlu, 'The Life', 198–202 and S. Yerasimos, *Légendes d'empire: La foundation de Constantinople et de Sainte-Sophie* (Paris 1990).

with which the church was built, derive from the *Diegesis* and are repeated by tour guides up to today.[73] In the Islamic version, Hagia Sophia was built with spolia from monuments constructed by Solomon (a prophet in Islamic tradition) and Mehmed's conquest of Constantinople was interpreted as the fulfilment of a prophecy of the Prophet Muhammad. With the appropriation and transformation of the Byzantine *Diegesis*, an Islamic layer was added to the already multi-layered past, as was the case in the physical building.

Hagia Sophia remained in use as a mosque until 1934, when it was secularized and became a museum.[74] This intervention marks the end of a period of more than 1,400 years of continuous religious use. I have shown how the Latin Crusaders as well as the Ottoman Turks appropriated and transformed the Byzantine church to make it suitable for the Latin and the Islamic worship respectively, and that these transformations involved no major structural interventions. The major changes after both 1204 and 1453 focused on the sanctuary of the Byzantine church. When the church became a Latin cathedral in 1204, the sanctuary, whether it was enlarged or not, remained a demarcated sacred space around the altar. After the church became a mosque, the removal of the barrier between the sanctuary and the nave created an open, non-hierarchical space.

While the interventions to make the building suitable for the Islamic worship immediately after 1453 were relatively minimal and some of the mosaics even remained visible, all clearly Christian elements such as the figural mosaics and depictions of crosses on marble parapets were eventually removed. Between 1847 and 1849 the Swiss architect Gaspare Fossati, assisted by his brother Giuseppe, restored the mosque by commission of Sultan Abdülmecid I.[75] The Christian mosaics that had been discovered during the restoration were covered again with plaster imitating the non-figural mosaics from the time of Justinian (Fig. 13.7). A few years before the building officially became a museum, the Byzantine Institute of America revealed the mosaics again and restored them. The result of their campaign is still visible today. Together with the parts of the building that recall its Islamic use, they are the result of the sum of its history (Fig. 13.1). When Hagia Sophia became a museum in 1934, it was deprived of its religious function for the first time in more than 1,400 years.

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73 On the content and interpretation of the *Diegesis* see C. Mango, 'Byzantine Writers on the Fabric of Hagia Sophia', in R. Mark and A. Çakmak (eds), *Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present* (Cambridge 1992), 45–50.

74 Nelson, *Hagia Sophia*, 155.

75 S. Schlüter, *Gaspare Fossatis Restaurierung der Hagia Sophia in Istanbul 1847–49* (Bern 1999).

Since then, the sound that has resonated in the interior is not that of prayer but of tourists from all over the world who have come to admire its architectural beauty.

On July 10, 2020, after a Turkish court announced that it had revoked Hagia Sophia's status as a museum, Turkish president Erdoğan issued a decree ordering Hagia Sophia to be opened for Muslim prayers. The president declared that the mosque would remain open to all and that its Christian icons and mosaics would not be damaged. Before the first Friday prayer was held on July 24, the sixth-century marble floor was covered with a green carpet and the apse mosaic showing Mary Theotokos was hidden from view by veils.

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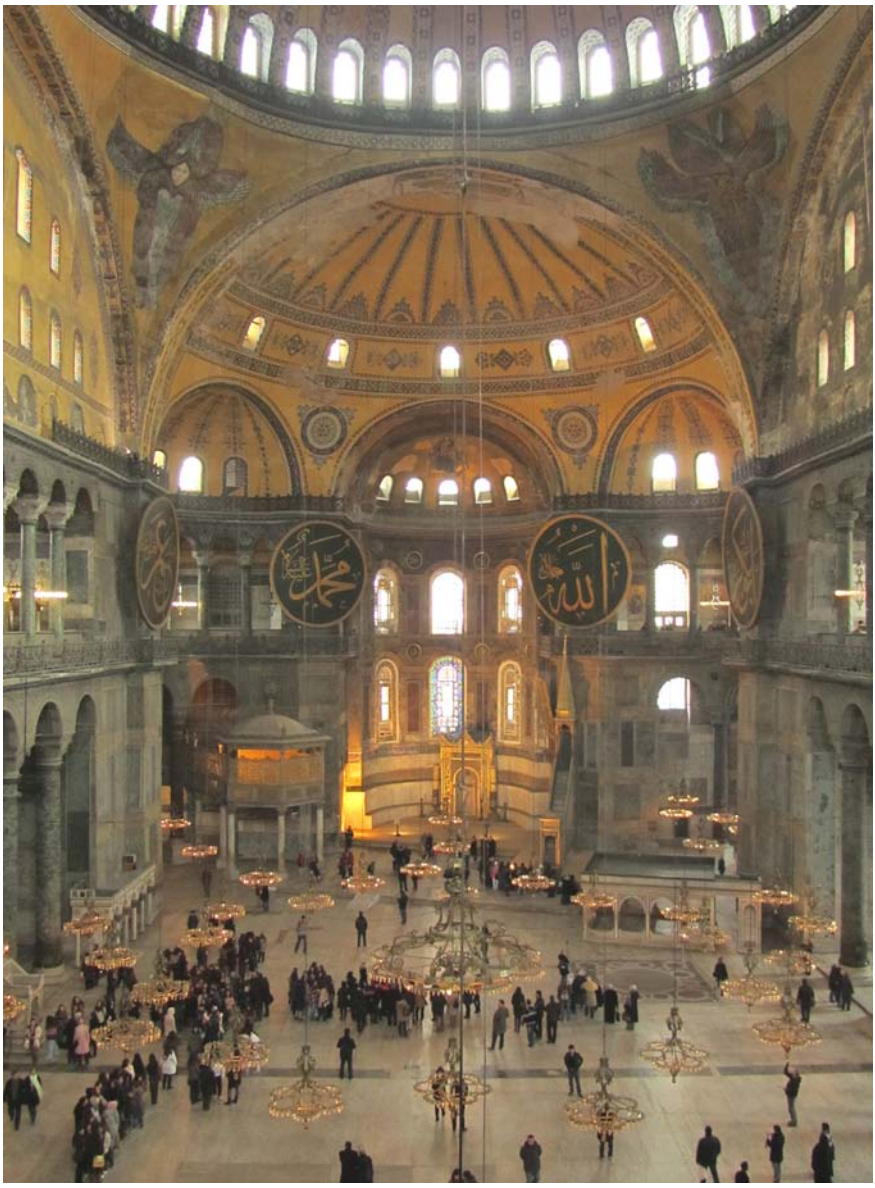

FIGURE 13.1 Istanbul, *Hagia Sophia*, interior, view looking eastwards
PHOTO: MARIËTTE VERHOEVEN

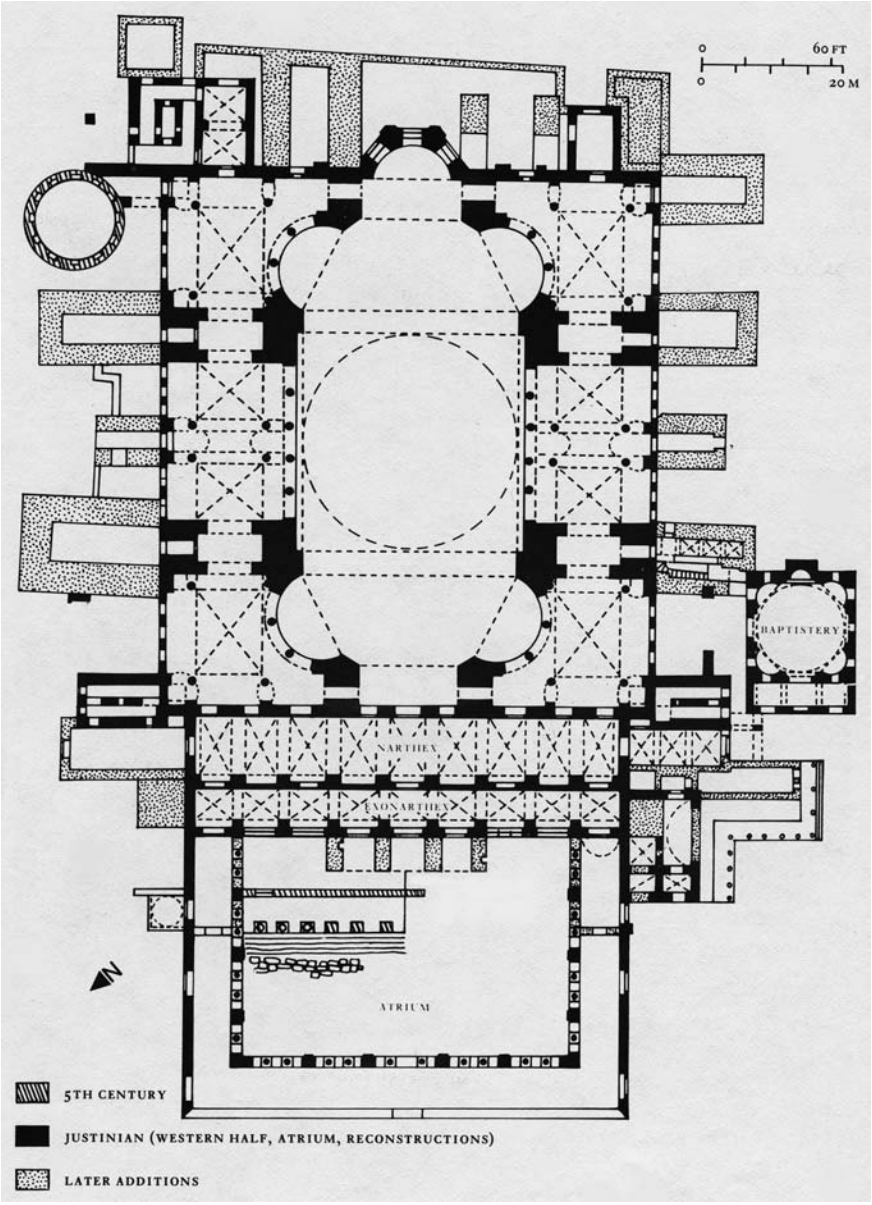

FIGURE 13.2 *Hagia Sophia*, plan
FROM: R. KRAUTHEIMER AND SLOBODAN ĆURČIĆ, *EARLY CHRISTIAN AND BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE* (NEW HAVEN AND LONDON 1986[4]), 207

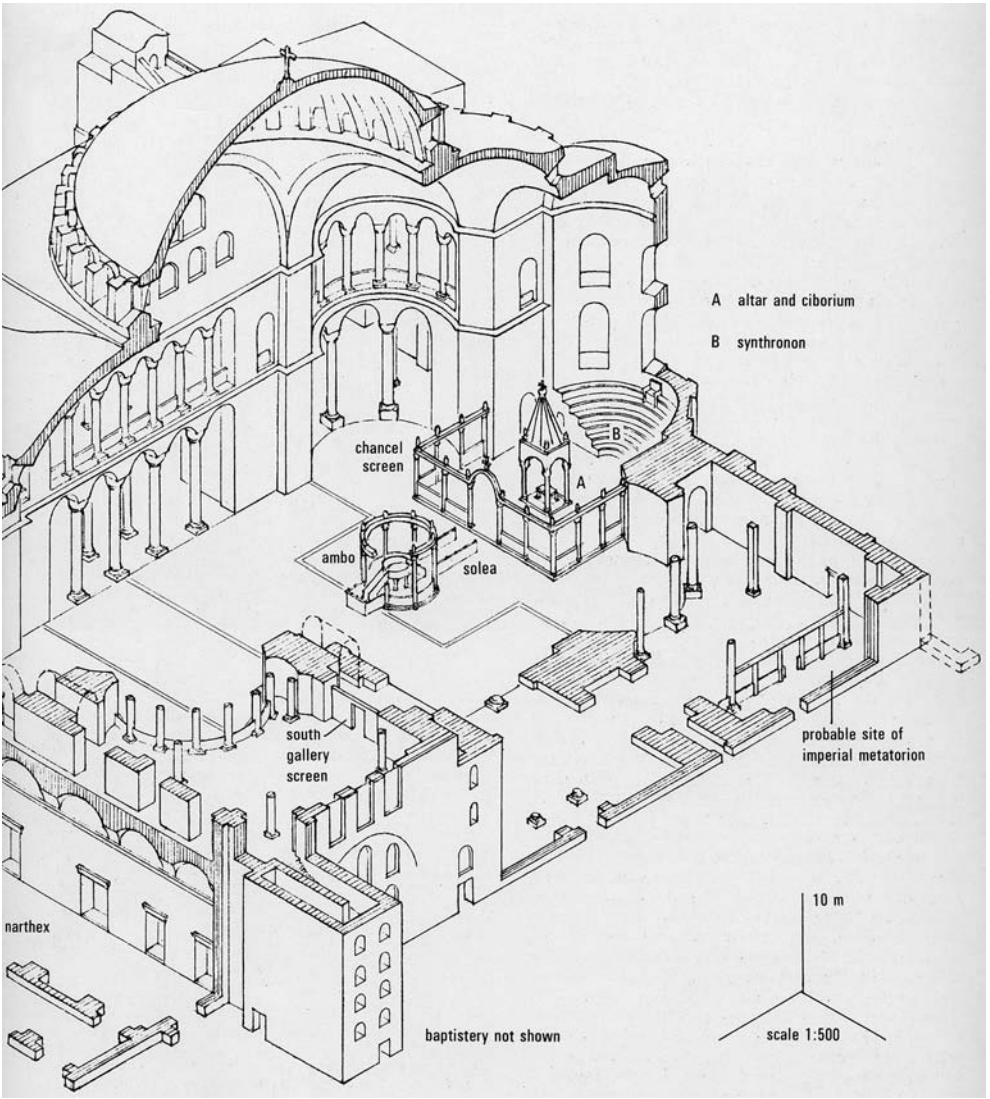

FIGURE 13.3 *Hagia Sophia*, axonometric drawing of the interior showing the principal liturgical furnishings
FROM: R.J. MAINSTONE, *HAGIA SOPHIA: ARCHITECTURE, STRUCTURE AND LITURGY OF JUSTINIAN'S GREAT CHURCH* (LONDON 1988), FIG. 252 (DETAIL)

FIGURE 13.4 *Hagia Sophia*, from the north-west in 1680, engraving from: G.-J. Grelot, *Relation nouvelle d'un voyage de Constantinople* (Paris 1681)
PHOTO: CENTRE FOR ART HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION, RADBOUD UNIVERSITY NIJMEGEN

FIGURE 13.5 *Hagia Sophia*, marble screen in the southern gallery, looking westwards
PHOTO: MARIËTTE VERHOEVEN

FIGURE 13.6 *Hagia Sophia*, exterior from the south-west
PHOTO: MARIËTTE VERHOEVEN

FIGURE 13.7 Gaspare Fossati, *Aya Sofia, Constantinople*, London 1852, pl. 4: interior looking westwards, lithography
PHOTO: DUMBARTON OAKS RESEARCH LIBRARY AND COLLECTION, TRUSTEES FOR HARVARD UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, DC

New Perspectives on Early Christian Rituals: Reflections and Connections

Nienke M. Vos

1 Introduction: Free Writer and Collections of Stories

For a number of years now, the Department of Humanities at the Vrije Universiteit (VU) of Amsterdam has had a writer-in-residence, the *Vrije Schrijver* ('Free Writer'). This honorary title refers to the name of the university, which was founded towards the end of the nineteenth century. The 'freedom' in question denotes 'independence', as the university was founded independently of the state. Thus, the Vrije Universiteit yearly invites a free, independent writer to reflect on whatever subject they choose.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the 'independent writer' was the Flemish author Annelies Verbeke. In December 2018, Verbeke gave a short 'lecture' and read one of her stories, which related specifically to the Christmas season. In her introduction, she explained that her favourite literary genre is that of the short story. Every collection of these that she writes has to contain fifteen stories. Two of her books have been translated into English: *Thirty Days* and *Assumptions*. The author also told her audience that these collections of short stories are sometimes barred from nomination for literary prizes because they do not sell as well as novels do. But she is resolved to remain loyal to her favourite genre. One important reason for choosing this form is that it 'counters absolute truths', as Verbeke stated, which is my rendition of a Dutch phrase which is difficult to translate: 'tegen het grote gelijk'. What Verbeke aims to do by presenting the perspectives of different characters is to counteract the often hard and one-sided dynamics of 'I am right'.

As I was listening to her, this image stuck, and it came back to me as I was writing this conclusion. The competition, or antagonism even, between the novel on the one hand and the collection of short stories on the other reminds me of its academic counterpart: the battle between the monograph and the volume of conference proceedings. Somehow, monographs are valued more, partly perhaps because of their better commercial prospects, as is the case of the novel. And yet I believe the merits of an academic collection of 'short stories' lie precisely in Verbeke's observation: it counteracts our tendency to state that 'I am right'. When reading a volume of proceedings, we are forced to take on multiple perspectives in terms of both content and method. We are invited to

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stay flexible. In what follows, then, I will offer an overview of the contributions in this volume while reflecting on their interconnectedness, thus highlighting both the variety and coherence of this particular collection. In the process, the new paradigm, as explicated in both the introduction to this volume and chapter 1, will be the guiding principle.

2 Reflections and Connections

The first chapter of this volume is by Gerard Rouwhorst. It pertains to the book as a whole because it contains important methodological observations that are related to the history of the field. Rouwhorst begins by stating that 'the study of early Christian rituals boasts a long and impressive research tradition', but this is followed immediately by the observation that 'a paradigm shift' has taken place in this field. This shift in focus is apparent in the study of early Christianity as well as that of rituals. In fact, developments in the two fields converge.

First he explains the traditional paradigm. This was defined by a focus on orthodoxy, which led to selective study of the sources. This biased procedure in turn resulted in a 'homogeneous' depiction of early Christian liturgy, which emphasized continuity between the New Testament material and the later, more developed traditions of the fourth century. Related to this normative approach was the desire to reconstruct the original rituals and to present them as the norm of the church in general, which implied that the descriptions of the origins were interpreted as instructions. This prescriptive outlook meant that less attention was given to the actual performance of rites. I would qualify this perspective as 'the ideology of the original'. Another corresponding characteristic was the highlighting of 'verbal elements' over and against non-verbal aspects related to enactment and spatial setting; this non-verbal dimension was often evaluated negatively. The predominance afforded to the verbal was also expressed in the quest for the 'symbolic and theological meanings' of texts. As time went on, the search for the original moved beyond the Christian context, focusing increasingly on pre-Christian, pagan traditions which might have influenced early Christian ritual. An additional and parallel development took place when scholars began to study the rituals of Judaism in a similar pursuit of origins. The twentieth-century movements that strove for liturgical reform gave a final incentive to retrieving the original and 'pure' strata of traditions: the oldest rituals could function as a template.

As Rouwhorst then turns to the paradigm shift from the traditional to the new, he hastens to add that the principles of the older scholarship 'have made a valuable and lasting contribution to the study of early Christian liturgy'; indeed,

these approaches still play a role, as a number of contributions in this volume in fact exemplify. Hans van Loon, for instance, discusses the context of Greco-Roman mystery religions and presents thorough philological research. What Rouwhorst proposes, then, is not to dismiss previous scholarship as 'obsolete', but to integrate 'new perspectives, in particular those that are derived from social sciences, cultural studies, and ritual studies, into the prevailing research design.' In order to demonstrate the benefits of this kind of integration, he discusses a number of the valuable contributions that these disciplines have made: in a sense, they form the counterpart to the traditional paradigm as described above.

The first characteristic which Rouwhorst mentions is the inclusiveness that social scientists practice, in terms of both the sources and the rituals selected for study. This means that attention is also paid to 'marginal, "popular", or even suspect' rituals. In the early Christian context, this has resulted in the inclusion of material about ritual in, for example, Gnostic, Manichaean, and Jewish Christian circles that had been generally ignored. Secondly, emphasis was placed on 'bodily behaviour'; rituals were now primarily seen as practices that were performed, which implies the significance of physical expression in the form of gestures and movements. The crucial role of the senses was highlighted, as was the determining factor of space. This insight into the centrality of performance was especially helpful in the context of Greco-Roman and Jewish religion, as 'believing' and 'doing' were seen as mutually implicative.

In a third section on the new paradigm, Rouwhorst discusses the work of Catherine Bell, who has distinguished three major trends in the field of ritual study. The topic of the historical origins of ritual is raised once again, now in the context of a debate on a relationship of dependence between history and myth: did rituals develop prior to myths or vice versa? Two additional perspectives were proposed by so-called 'symbolists' and 'functionalists', the former interpreting rituals as a type of symbolic language which had to be decoded, the latter focusing on the social function of rituals, for instance as tools in the demarcation of boundaries. A final trait which Rouwhorst observes and which bears specifically on our theme, is the fact that the new paradigm demonstrates 'a strong tendency to challenge the aura of immutability and stability which often surrounds rituals'. On the whole, 'the dynamic character of rituals' is highlighted as they were 'continuously transformed'. This leads to the realization that 'contexts are always complex' because of the ongoing interplay between social, cultural, and religious forces.

In the second chapter of the volume, this foregrounding of 'the dynamics of ritual change' informs Rouwhorst's subsequent analysis of three major Christian

ritual traditions, which he presents as case studies: early Christian Passover, the pilgrimage liturgy in Jerusalem and its surroundings, and the feast of the Epiphany. In what follows, I will highlight a selection of his observations.

The first case, Christian Passover, immediately exemplifies the methodological features which Rouwhorst discusses as he notes that the desire to reconstruct the original form of the celebration stood high on the scholarly agenda for a long time. This research had surprising results (see section 1 of the chapter). It also led to an interest in the Jewish context, as many parallels were observed. Greco-Roman religion provided another pre-Christian framework that exhibited similarities in terms of ritual practice. But Rouwhorst moves away from a one-sided emphasis on 'the quest for origins'. Instead, he stresses the significance of the transformation process and the essential role played by rituals as tools of boundary setting, both externally (vis-à-vis other religions) and internally (between divergent Christian groups).

The second case study focuses on the pilgrimage liturgy of Jerusalem and involves the development of the liturgical year. The categories of time and space play leading roles. As regards time, Rouwhorst discusses the tension between historical and eschatological interpretations. He subsequently explores the topic of space. The author first points to the importance of churches as places where rituals are performed, as well as to the implications of the major building activities that were executed from the fourth century onwards. This sets the scene for the exploration of an essential concept: collective/cultural memory. The notion of cultural memory underlines the significance both of specific locations and of the concrete rituals performed there. These enabled the faithful to participate in a multi-sensory experience. Again, the Jewish context of certain feasts is addressed, but this leads once more to the highlighting of boundary demarcation rather than the quest for origins.

The third and final example concerns the complex traditions relating to the feast of the Epiphany, and this involves familiar issues: the influence of pre-Christian traditions, the search for origins, and the fundamental notion of collective memory. Rouwhorst analyses the remarkable proliferation of Epiphany themes and traditions, while pointing once more to the critical function of rituals in the process of demarcating boundaries. Ultimately, early Christian rituals continually demonstrate 'a complex interplay of transformations'.

This complex interplay is also apparent in the contribution by Rianne Voogd, who asks whether the apostle Paul transformed 'an everyday gesture into a Christian act' when he instructed his readers 'to greet one another with a holy kiss'. In answering this question, the author first observes that in the ancient world kisses played a role in both daily life and in literature, for instance in let-

ters. Voogd presents research on the textual form of the greeting in the New Testament, which has been analysed in terms of four constitutive elements as well as three different types (relating to the subject of the action). One of the four distinctive elements is the notion of 'an elaborating phrase', an exemplification of which is Paul's 'holy kiss'. Voogd then further analyses this concept of 'the holy kiss'. First she reflects on the function of this call to greet one another with a kiss in a context of absence. She then continues by addressing the two constitutive elements of the respective terms: 'holy' and 'kiss'. The former represents the functions of summary and prescription, while the latter points to the communal and equalizing implications of this action. In the third section of her contribution, Voogd looks more closely at the issue of definition and includes a description of ritual in terms of repetition, pattern, community, and physicality. She concludes that what we have here is an instance of personal ritual creativity.

Jan Bremmer's contribution also discusses a phenomenon well known from daily life: the meal. Ultimately the action of sharing a meal would develop into one of the defining sacraments of the church, but Bremmer aims to trace the early stages of its development. His selection of sources reflects one of the features of the new paradigm as described by Rouwhorst, because the author moves away from (proto-)orthodoxy and analyses the apocryphal Acts of the apostles. He investigates four of these: the Acts of John, Andrew, Peter, and Paul. All of these must be situated in Asia Minor and are dated to the second century. Bremmer examines the four Acts, starting with those of John. This narrative work includes a number of episodes involving meals which give rise to important observations. To begin with, a particular pattern is visible, which is suggestive of 'a specific ritual act'. Second, two types of meals are distinguished: the *Eucharist* and the *agapê*. A third and very striking element is the fact that the place of action in one of the scenes is a grave. Bremmer observes: 'In a way, the sepulchre stands in for the house church'. Fourthly, the author notes a unique instance in which the Eucharist is qualified as 'most holy', a qualification that is reminiscent of Voogd's contribution on the 'holy kiss'. A fifth significant point is the ascetic nature of the ritual, as water is consumed instead of wine. After researching the other three apocryphal Acts, Bremmer surprisingly considers two Greco-Roman sources: the novel *Leucippe and Clitophon* and Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*. The former, Bremmer contends, 'almost certainly includes a parody of the Eucharist.'

In an extensive reflection on his topic, the author then addresses various relevant issues. First, he points to the notion of regional variation, arguing that his sources make an essential contribution to the theme. Next, he crucially stresses

that two types of meals, that is, two distinct rituals, existed from very early on. In the early stages of the development, the ritual of the Eucharist seems to have been a flexible practice, which included the attribution of a specifically symbolic meaning to the 'breaking' of the bread. Like Rouwhorst, Bremmer also focuses on the social functions of the event, for instance in terms of setting boundaries. In this context, he emphasizes the essential concept of 'identity formation'. In addition, he highlights the important connection between the notion of 'holiness' and ethics, mentioned earlier in Voogd's contribution on the kiss. The author also comments on the 'total absence of an institution narrative'. Towards the end of his contribution, Bremmer raises the familiar issue, addressed by Rouwhorst as well, of the possible influence of pre-Christian practices. Like Rouwhorst, he observes that research on the origins of the Eucharist has often been ideologically motivated. He nevertheless accepts 'that both Jewish and Greco-Roman traditions contributed to the development of the early Christian ritual.' At the same time, however, he stresses the highly *innovative* use of language related to ritual meals. A final discussion involves possible connections between Greco-Roman associations, or so-called *collegia*, and the Jesus groups. While certain parallels may be noted, there were also conspicuous differences between meal practices, as Christian meals were more frequent, sober, egalitarian, and inclusive (cf. once more Voogd's contribution). Although they were fundamentally inclusive, it is clear that Christians protected the boundaries of their communities by applying strict rules of admission. Bremmer's contribution once again confronts us with the intricate dynamics of transformation and innovation, this time in the context of hitherto neglected sources.

Hans van Loon's contribution entitled 'The Terminology of Mystery Cults in Cyril of Alexandria' focuses specifically on the notion of linguistic innovation. Van Loon's approach exhibits some of the benefits that Rouwhorst relates to the traditional paradigm: (1) philological research (2) into the work of a mainstream Christian author (3) in order to clarify pre-Christian influence. A relatively innovative aspect of this procedure is the fact that it makes extensive use of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, a digital tool that allows scholars to carry out thorough linguistic research in a way that was impossible before the rise of the database (cf. also Vos' contribution in this volume). Van Loon's research is motivated by the hypothesis, first proposed by Georges Mathieu de Durand in the 1970s, that Cyril consciously Christianized the language of the mysteries. As van Loon sets out to test this hypothesis by undertaking serious semantic research based on a wide-ranging set of terms, he first introduces a description of the Eleusinian Mysteries in terms of both ritual and myth. These two

related aspects call to mind Rouwhorst's references to the debate on the priority of either ritual or myth, as well as the possible dependence of the former on the latter or vice versa. Van Loon comments on the layered conception of myth, as it can be interpreted in anthropomorphic terms, but also as an allegory of nature or even as an element in the system of Platonic philosophy. Moreover, the language of the mysteries can function metaphorically, as a reference to mystical contemplation. As van Loon introduces the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, we are again confronted by the debate on the relationship between Christianity and its Greco-Roman context; the author paraphrases the various positions that have been taken. He also presents a variety of early Christian sources (Justin, Tertullian, Clement) that contain aspects of the language of the mysteries. Some scholars, such as C. Auffahrt, have argued that there had been a 'cultic turn' in connection with the conversion of Constantine. According to Auffahrt, the connotation of the word *mystêrion* changed from 'the whole mystery of salvation' to a technical term for the sacraments. In addition, van Loon refers to the work of G.G. Stroumsa, who suggested another semantic shift: 'away from the sacraments and towards a more mystical understanding'. The author addresses both claims. Once the scene has been set by expounding both the Eleusinian Mysteries and the various views on their possible impact on Christianity, van Loon presents his philological analysis of mystery terminology in Cyril. This brings out the multifaceted application of mystery language in the work of this Alexandrian bishop and includes some surprising results. These, in turn, necessitate significant corrections to scholarly consensus.

The same applies to the research presented by Paula Rose in her analysis of Augustine's treatment of the commemoration meal, another example of a pre-Christian ritual, set in the context of burial practices. Augustine criticizes these rituals on a number of occasions, for instance because they lead to shameful behaviour such as drinking and dancing. He also distinguishes between meals organized to commemorate deceased family members and rituals that celebrate the death of the martyrs. Generally, the bishop of Hippo prefers transforming these festive practices into other ritual actions, such as the giving of alms, prayer, and participation in the Eucharist. It is apparent, however, that Augustine's opinions on the topic vary, and these divergences have been interpreted in terms of a chronological development in his thinking on the matter. In her contribution, Rose takes a fresh look at the Augustinian dossier by paying specific attention to genre, textual type, biblical intertextuality, and rhetorical tropes. Thus, the author employs a broad methodology which is partly informed by recent developments in the field of discourse linguistics. To start, she notes that the source material is varied in terms of genre: letters, sermons,

and monographs. Differences in text type can also be observed, as some passages are prescriptive, while others are argumentative or narrative. Rose analyses these variations and reaches a number of remarkable conclusions that challenge prevailing scholarship.

The next contribution by Jutta Dresken-Weiland also focuses on aspects of burial practice. As an archaeologist, her expertise is on material culture, and in her contribution she asks how Christians expressed their faith, specifically their hope of an afterlife, in grave inscriptions, and how these expressions were informed by the pre-Christian cultural context. The author starts by describing the oldest phrases in the source material, which generally include a reference to 'peace', before moving on to a more elaborate presentation of themes relating to death and the afterlife in early Christian epigraphy. This is followed by a specific study of the Last Judgement as the author discusses three instances in which this theological notion is mentioned. Dresken-Weiland observes that references to the afterlife, for instance in the guise of the Last Judgement, are rare, and she endeavours to explain this conspicuous fact. Several explanations are presented, some of which reflect on the complicated and layered connections between early Christians and the broader Greco-Roman culture of which they were a part. She observes that convention played a significant role, especially in the context of sepulchral traditions. Another important aspect was the development that took place in the fourth century as the location for burials increasingly shifted from the catacomb to the church. After analysing the linguistic features of Christian grave inscriptions, Dresken-Weiland addresses the issue of visual representations, because a considerable number of cases include references to the afterlife. The author demonstrates how early Christians were highly innovative in this area. Thus, when studying early Christian sepulchral culture, a multifaceted approach is crucial as regional variation exists as well as development over time. Also, the mode of expression must be taken into account, as analysis of the visual imagery provides a richer picture than research based solely on linguistic evidence can. In each case, complex patterns of continuity and discontinuity emerge.

Karel Innemée's contribution deals with another fundamental aspect of material culture that expresses both identity and social status: clothing. Innemée traces the development of various types of ecclesiastical dress, including many transformations of Roman custom. There is very little evidence for specific church dress for the first three centuries, so the author starts by describing Roman dress in general as it would have been worn by early Christians, simply because they were part of the wider culture. This is also reflected in the way

Christ and his apostles are depicted. The fourth century represents a turning point for two reasons: there is an increasing body of evidence, and the conversion of Constantine had an 'imperial' impact on the iconography of Christ as well as on the dress of bishops. Innemée clarifies how traditions of clothing changed over time, including a wide range of elements that were incorporated into the ecclesiastical dress code, such as the decorated tunic, the pallium, and special shoes called *campagi*. He explains that this was probably a matter of persons in positions of leadership wearing their 'Sunday best', which in turn 'fossilized' in the form of standard liturgical clothing representing various roles and ranks. When society evolved, the church continued to use the fashion of times long gone by. As the costume of bishops, priests, and deacons is analysed, it becomes clear that it is necessary to distinguish between liturgical clothing and the more general notion of ecclesiastical dress. In both contexts, signs of personal distinction could be included in the costume. It is also crucial to note that there were many regional variations when it came to ecclesiastical dress. This theme of regional variation also appears in other contributions, for instance on the development of Christian festivals and burial traditions. To conclude his text, the author discusses one last significant influence on the formation of ecclesiastical costume: monastic dress. In the East especially, where there was a close alliance between the church hierarchy and monastic circles, monastic influence on the development of ecclesiastical clothing is apparent as markers of social status were once again integrated into ecclesiastical and liturgical dress codes.

The following two contributions, by Joop van Waarden and Nienke Vos, each relate to one of the two spheres mentioned by Innemée, spheres that are distinct *and* intertwined: the church and monasticism. From diverse perspectives, the authors focus on rituals that are connected to a fundamental early Christian notion: penitence. Van Waarden addresses this concept in the context of a collective rite, while Vos discusses an individual mode of ritualized contrition. Both cases nevertheless have a clear didactic and moral framework.

Van Waarden approaches his topic, the Gallic Rogations, from an innovative methodological perspective, that of cognitive science. He has noticed a number of anomalies in the texts that mention the Rogations and proposes a new theoretical angle to interpret these. One of the peculiarities observed by the author concerns a familiar theme: 'the continuity with "pagan", classical Roman propitiatory rituals', which is related to the motif of transformation as 'in Christianity (…) the notion of conscience is added'. This fundamental 'notion of conscience' reappears in Vos' article on spiritual direction in monasticism. As has been seen, van Waarden takes his methodological cue from the Cognitive

Science of Religion (CSR), as he introduces two dominant theories: the Ritual Frequency Hypothesis (or Modes Theory) and the Ritual Form Theory. Both correlate phenomena of religious ritual to functions of the brain. The former focuses on the connections between frequency, levels of arousal, and various memory systems. The latter distinguishes between different types of rituals based on specific combinations of the 'agent', 'patient', and 'action/instrument' involved. As an aside, let me just add that these theories could surely be fruitfully applied to other rituals discussed in this volume on early Christian rituals. In this instance, van Waarden analyses the Rogations, a propitiatory and atonement ritual, on the basis of these theories. In doing so, the author sheds new light on what happened during the rituals. On a deeper level, it also enables him to interpret the ambiguities involved: one-off versus repetition, excitement versus boredom, the doctrinal versus the experiential, ethics versus emotion, etc. Van Waarden consequently asks the intriguing question whether it was in fact a clever move by the bishops to introduce the Rogations. Contemplating possible alternatives, again based on the CSR paradigm, van Waarden creatively includes a discussion of the cult of the saints, in which he adapts the theory by adding the category of a 'middle course'. Finally, the author argues for the complementarity of different kinds of rituals which may, based on their various cognitive functions, be of value in their own, specific way.

A number of connections between van Waarden's and Vos' contributions have already been noted. A special case of resonance occurs when van Waarden writes about 'the late antique and early medieval periods, when introspection, work on the soul, and containment of the body became mainstream.' This statement precisely captures the focus of Vos' contribution on spiritual direction in early Christian monasticism. As a starting point, the author has chosen the iconic phrase 'Father, give me a word', which she interprets, along the lines of the definition proposed by Voogd, in terms of a ritual. The ritualized language of the question, for which the *Apophthegmata Patrum* (Sayings of the Fathers/*Verba Seniorum*) are famous, seems to be part of a ritual of seeking and receiving spiritual direction. Vos first sets the scene by describing the text and context of the *Apophthegmata*, before moving on to a linguistic analysis of this phrase, which is based, like van Loon's work, on the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae. This produces a number of surprising results which require a reinterpretation of the popularity of this iconic clause. The research then broadens out as the author moves from analysis of a 'ritual of transformation' to discussion of the 'transformation of the ritual'. She argues there that the asking and answering of spiritually motivated questions must be set in the context of education and the related quest for care of the soul. First, Vos investigates the

roots of such educational traditions, as she considers Greek philosophy, classical rhetoric, and Pauline models of pastoral care. One of the aspects she looks at is the influential practice of letter writing that was also vital to Voogd's contribution. Vos then further traces the transformation process as she describes the impact that monastic traditions of spiritual care, themselves products of a variety of earlier movements, had on later developments. A case in point are the Irish Penitentials, which show the influence of monastic perspectives on the related themes of sin, penance, and forgiveness. As such, monastic interpretations of the human condition included a unique model of responding to personal failure and weakness, which conceived of the spiritual growth process in medical terms and eventually eclipsed older and harsher theories on the treatment of sin. Thus, Vos shows how the specific ritualized action of seeking spiritual advice, expressed in the ritualized request for 'a word', mirrors pre-existing traditions of learning, while it also exemplifies a new and individual approach that in turn influenced later conceptions and practices of pastoral care.

Similarly, Jacques van der Vliet focuses on the geography of Egypt, and he also takes a long-term perspective. But his topic is quite different—at least at first sight—, as he considers the magical texts of early Christian Egypt. This corpus of texts is very diverse in terms of language, genre, and style. Most are concerned with issues of power and protection in everyday crisis situations. The various types of discourse are found in documents and on artefacts, implying specific ritual and social practices. Van der Vliet observes that Christian ritual discourse involves both the transformation of pre-existing traditions and procedures of innovation. As the author addresses the paradigmatic shift that took place from the fourth century onwards due to the process of Christianization, he distinguishes between the three core strategies of reframing, rewriting, and overwriting. While discussing different types of ritual in the context of this threefold model, van der Vliet notes the important components of text *and* matter, since a wide range of material ingredients are involved. As regards the textual aspect, the choice of language is crucial, as is the phenomenon of repetition. All of these elements contribute to the efficacy of the ritual in question, which points to the fundamental notion of performance. In this context, it seems that rituals could be exported from church liturgy to situations of daily life, which is a reverse movement compared to that observed above, for instance by Innemée, who analysed the incorporation of everyday garments into the life of the church. There is also a connection with van Waarden's contribution in relation to the vital role attributed to the saints, as van der Vliet observes that the efficacy of prayers is heightened by their attribution to holy

men and women. On the whole, we encounter complex and layered rituals that are firmly rooted in the concrete fabric of everyday life. By focusing on so-called 'magical' texts, the author, like Bremmer, has opted to study heterodox material (cf. Rouwhorst's contribution, which describes a major shift from the dominant interest in orthodox texts to documents which had been hitherto been regarded as 'heretical'). Finally, like van Loon and Rose, van der Vliet challenges the scholarly consensus as he contends that more traditional views involving pre-supposed distinctions between 'high' and 'low' culture should be abandoned. The author points to the importance of literacy, arguing against the prevalent binary model and for a more nuanced three-tiered one. As van der Vliet reflects on the unique and influential body of these Christianized ritual texts, the familiar monks of Egypt suddenly appear in a new light as their role in the formation of early Egyptian Christianity is re-envisioned.

The last two contributions of this volume present parallel processes in (cf. the introduction to this volume), as well as connections with, the other two major monotheistic religions, Judaism and Islam. The first is by Leon Mock and includes significant links to the previous article by van der Vliet, in that the combined notions of demonic interference and apotropaic rituals of magic play an important role. In his introduction, the author places his topic, the ritual washing of hands in rabbinic Judaism, in the wider methodological context of twentieth-century developments. Like Rouwhorst, Mock notes a shift away from the historical and philological towards sociology and anthropology, which has led, among other things, to an increased interest in the phenomenon of rituals. The author also signals (again like Rouwhorst) the importance of the field of ritual studies with its emphasis on 'body, gestures, space' as well as on 'event and performance'. All of these aspects are particularly relevant to his theme, the daily ritual of handwashing. This ritual must first and foremost be interpreted in the context of 'purity' and 'impurity'. Mock then considers the various settings in which the ritual appears, such as prayer, medicine, magic, and hygiene, while analysing the rabbinic sources and observing dynamics of transformation and diachronic expansion. Once more, the meal appears as a special case, as it tends to attract and incorporate religious meaning. An important framework of interpretation is, again, that of group identity and boundary setting, both externally and internally (cf. Rouwhorst's case studies in chapter 2).

The final contribution is by Mariëtte Verhoeven and moves away from the realm of the private and the quotidian to that of the public and the festive. Its topic is the transformation and continuation of rituals in the famous Hagia Sophia

through the ages, and this once more leads us to the context of material culture, church building, and the official liturgy. Hagia Sophia was first built in the sixth century and exemplified a new and unprecedented phase in church construction in terms of both scale and architectural invention. It was designed to mirror the heavenly sphere. The article focuses on two major breaks in its history, the conquest by the Crusaders in 1204 and the takeover by the Muslims in 1453, but Verhoeven aims to highlight patterns of continuity rather than discontinuity. While many transformations happened in terms of decoration and ritual expression, the building itself has remained remarkably unchanged. It has even retained its name. The author does, however, consider fundamental adaptations regarding the usage of the space in the Islamic context as well as the appropriation of Christian texts (cf. van der Vliet's strategies of Christianization). Ultimately, the twentieth century witnessed a decisive development, as for the first time in 1400 years, the edifice ceased to function in a religious context. As Verhoeven imaginatively notes the movement from utterances of prayer to the oohs and aahs of tourists as well as its recent reversal, we are once more confronted by the *longue durée* of history, which allows us to trace traditions and their transformations over long periods of time. This enables us to consider, in addition to the roots of our field in classical and late antiquity, such diverse topics as the Prayer of the Basin in the Coptic Orthodox Church today and the modern Ethiopian *däbtära*, the function of ritual as an identity marker in contemporary Judaism, as well as twenty-first-century expressions of admiration in the Hagia Sophia.

3 To conclude

It is the hope of the editors that this multifaceted and multidisciplinary volume on the complex dynamics between traditions and transformations will open up to the reader new vistas of understanding, thus qualifying what Annelies Verbeke (see the 'Introduction' to this closing contribution) has described as the claim to absolute truths. In this way, the volume can be read as an invitation to stay flexible.

Indices

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The first three indices only apply to the main text; references in footnotes and bibliography are not included. For ancient names consult the indices of names, subjects, and references. Repetitions are avoided where possible. Page numbers joined by a dash indicate a reference on each of the pages, not a continuous discussion.

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